MATERNAL EMPLOYMENT, MOTHERING AND OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

By

SUSAN HARVEY HOERBELT

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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By

Susan Harvey Hoerbelt

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Possible outcomes for children on the basis of maternal employment patterns were investigated in this study. Two hypotheses were derived from previous theory and research. These were tested using the data described in a 1980 report by the U.S. Department of Education, High School and Beyond. These data were gathered from a national sample of high school seniors and sophomores.

The first hypothesis predicted that the influence of parental attitudes on those expressed by their children would be negatively correlated to the extent of maternal employment. The more mothers work, the less time they

have to inculcate their children with their particular attitudes. Conversely, the more time the children are in someone else's care, the more influential attitudes of caretakers should be. Results of the analysis did not support the hypothesis.

The second hypothesis predicted differences in the behaviors and attitudes of children on the basis of maternal employment. During the periods when mothers are at work, socialization is accomplished by others; i.e., daycare workers. Because substitute socializers do not have the investment in children that their parents have, the intensity of the process may diminish. Furthermore, the influence of peers in the socializing process would increase. Previous research and theory suggest that the behavior of males may be more greatly affected than that of females. Results of this analysis were not able to support this hypothesis.

Attitudes regarding sex-role orientations of children should also be influenced by maternal employment. Sex role orientations are acquired, in part, by observing behaviors of others, especially close relatives of the same sex. Mothers who are gainfully employed exhibit

behaviors reflecting a sex-role orientation which differs from that exhibited by mothers who are not gainfully employed. Previous research and theory suggest that maternal employment patterns should be especially important to the sex-role orientations of daughters. The present study could not support this hypothesis.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This dissertation reports the results of a study on the effects of maternal employment on children. Changes in the work patterns of mothers over the past two decades make this a timely issue. The percentage of U.S. women in the labor force has been increasing for some time. This has been true for all women: married women, women with children, and female heads of household.

Women in the Labor Force

In 1940, 26% of women of working age (16 and older) had jobs or were looking for work (Waite, 1981). By 1960, this figure had risen to 37.7% (Simmons, Freedman, Dunkle, & Blau, 1975). By 1980, 52% of these women were working or seeking work (Waite, 1981). Following this protocol, the term work is used herein to indicate gainful employment. The proportion of married women who work has also increased. In 1940, 13.3% of all married women were gainfully employed (Wandersee, 1981). By 1960, 30.7% of this group was at work (Masnick & Bane, 1980). Two decades

later, 50% of all married women were in the labor force (Waite, 1981).

Traditionally, the women least likely to work outside the house have been those with children. However, gainful employment has also been increasing among these women. In 1960, 33.1% of mothers with school-age children participated full time in the labor force (Masnick & Bane, 1980). By 1980, this portion had increased to 54% (Waite, 1981). The most dramatic increases in labor force participation rates have been among mothers with young children. In 1960, 23.5% of mothers with children aged 3-5 years were working full time for at least some part of the year. Among those mothers with children under age 3, 19.4% held full-time jobs (Masnick & Bane, 1980); 20 years later, 45% of mothers of children under age 6 were in the labor force (Waite, 1981).

Among households headed by females, figures indicate high numbers of employed mothers. According to the U.S. Department of Labor (1983), in 1970 the number of divorced mothers with children ages 6-17 who were working amounted to 82.4%. Among mothers with children under age 6, the number was 63.3%. In 1980, these figures stood at 82.3% and 65.4%, respectively, showing that

this pattern has remained relatively stable for more than a decade.

Increasingly larger numbers of young children have employed mothers. For example, in March 1980, 43% of all children under age 6 had working mothers. In a single year, this figure had risen nearly 2% to 44.9% ("Changing Faces," 1981) (see Table 1.1).

There is every indication that rates of employment among women will continue to increase. In projecting future trends in labor force participation of women, Fullerton (1980) has presented three possible forecasts through 1995. These reflect conservative (low growth) estimates, middle range estimates, and high growth predictions. He concluded that, regardless of how much the total labor force increases, women will account for most of that growth. "More than two-thirds of the 1980-95 labor force growth would come from women" (p. 12).

Fullerton's projections show that prime-age workers (25-54 years), particularly women, will experience an important rate of growth. Table 1 contrasts middle-growth rate projections for men and women by age groups (p. 13). For each time period, the rate of growth for women is nearly double that for men.

Table 1-1. Annual Rate of Growth of the Civilian Labor Force by Sex and Age 1975-79 and Projected to 1995 (in %).

Sex, Age	Actual 1975-79	1979-1985	1985-1990	1990-1995
Men				
16 to 24	3.15	-1.47	-2.17	-1.16
25 to 54	1.83	2.06	1.88	1.10
Over 54	-0.81	0.78	-1.20	-0.57
Women				
16 to 24	3.30	0.49	-0.90	-0.21
25 to 54	4.88	4.28	3.24	1.73
Over 54	2.05	0.45	-0.61	0.01

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Handbook of Labor Statistics. Bulletin No. 2175. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983, p. 13.

Preliminary Statement of the Research Problem

Experts from various fields have been concerned with the potentially "negative" effects of maternal employment on children. Maternal employment sets limits on the amount of time that mothers have available to spend with their children. It may also diminish the intimacy of the mother-child relationship inasmuch as it causes children to be exposed to surrogate socializing agents such as babysitters and day-care center personnel. Maternal employment may produce important changes in the mother-child relationship and should result in various consequences for children. However, empirical studies have not been able to provide support for this position. After reviewing the pertinent research findings, Rallings and Nye (1979) concluded that, "despite a persistent concern over the effects of maternal employment on the child, we can find little evidence of appreciable effects, positive or negative" (p. 217). Various experts have pointed out methodological shortcomings of past research which may account for the disparity between theoretical predictions and empirical evidence.

This dissertation investigates this debate by focusing on three criticisms of previous research. Specifically, the present study addresses three of these criticisms:

1. Many studies were conducted using children in daycare centers associated with universities (Belsky & Steinberg, 1978). Children who attend these centers and the centers themselves do not represent daycare facilities throughout the society. Maternal employment may not have the same effects on these children as those which would be found in the general population.

2. They often fail to adequately operationalize and control for the effects of social class, which may be important in determining outcomes of maternal employment for children (Hoffman, 1974).

3. Past research has also been criticized for failing to take into account past employment histories of mothers, which may influence any effects of maternal employment for children (Maccoby, 1980).

This study analyses possible relationships between maternal employment and outcomes for children using the data set by the U.S. Dept. of Education (1980). The

data were gathered from a nationally representative sample of high school sophomores and seniors between ages 15 and 17. The heterogeneity of the sample permitted generalization of findings to a wider cross-section of children than allowed by most previous studies. The data set also contains a detailed operationalization of social class. Hence, changes in the effects of maternal employment across levels of social class could be examined. In response to a third criticism of previous research, High School and Beyond (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1980) also contains information as to maternal employment patterns throughout children's lives.

Statement of the Research Strategy

The goal of the present study was to examine the disparity between speculations regarding gender role beliefs and research findings concerning the topic of effects of maternal employment on children. This was accomplished by deriving testable hypotheses from widely accepted theories regarding child development (see Chapter II).

One hypothesis focused on the extent of the influence parents have on their children's attitudes. Children whose mothers have not worked--i.e., remained the

traditional socializing agent--should be expected to express attitudes more closely aligned to those of their mothers than those children whose mothers worked--i.e., used surrogate socializing agents.

A second focus concerned some possible behavioral and attitudinal differences among children on the basis of their mothers' employment patterns. Children with nonworking mothers should be expected to demonstrate a higher degree of conformity to societal standards of behavior than those whose mothers have been gainfully employed. Also, mothers who have never worked provide a traditional role model for their children. They should embrace sex-role attitudes which are rather traditional compared to the sex-role orientations expressed by children of employed mothers.

Chapter II discusses the various theoretical perspectives from which the hypotheses were derived. Chapter III reviews the other side of the debate, pertinent pieces of research revealing the lack of empirical evidence that maternal employment affects outcomes for children. The hypotheses, specific models, and analytic techniques are then formally presented in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER II
INFLUENTIAL FACTORS IN SOCIALIZATION AND CONSEQUENCES FOR CHILDREN

Individuals acquire personal identities and develop values and aspirations through the process of socialization. This is a complex process which is influenced by a variety of factors (Broom, Selznick, & Darroch, 1981). Furthermore, the impact of any single factor may vary over time (Reid & Stephens, 1985). One relationship that is influential throughout the process of socialization is that of mothers and their children (Erikson, 1982). Because maternal employment represents a different child-rearing pattern than that followed by mothers who are not employed and are the primary socializers of their children, there may be significant consequences for children.

The importance of the role of the mother throughout the process of socialization is discussed primarily in the context of Erikson's (1950, 1982) idea of psychosocial development. He conceives of child development as

sequential and emergent. This premise provides one way of understanding how conditions such as maternal employment may affect children at various stages in their lives.

This chapter develops the theory from which hypotheses are drawn. The process of acquiring attitudes is the basis for one prediction regarding outcomes for children on the basis of maternal employment patterns. The perspective of social learning theory provides a theoretical explanation as to other ways in which children may be affected by maternal employment. Basic differences in the socialization of males and females also suggests that some outcomes may be more important for males and others may be more important for females. The specific research hypotheses, based on these theories, will be formally presented in Chapter IV.

The Importance of the Mother Throughout Stages of Development in Children

One way to understand the importance of the mother's role in socialization of children is to trace the acquisition of personality as it is influenced by that process. Strong bonds have been found to develop between mothers and their children within a few hours of birth (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Once this link has been established,

maintenance and continuity are extremely important to young children in the development of a sense of well-being.

The importance of the mother-child relationship for children is widely accepted. Social learning theorists (Kagan, 1984) and parental identification theorists (Damon, 1983) acknowledge the impact that mothers have on their developing children's personalities. Erikson's (1950, 1982) theories regarding the psychosocial development of children also stress the mother-child relationship. One way to elucidate the continuing significance of this relationship in the development of children is to trace children's psychosocial development using Erikson's theories.

Erikson, expanding on Freud's ideas on the sexuality of children, argues that psychosocial development occurs in a series of ordered stages. Each stage of development requires children to acquire certain competencies if they are to be successful in subsequent stages of development. In each of these stages, the importance of the mother in this acquisition process is apparent. The first task is to develop a sense of trust. Erikson interprets this process as the evolution of a sense of

reliability. "The general state of trust . . . implies that one has learned to rely on the sameness and continuity of outer providers" (Erikson. 1950, p. 220). Success at this stage of development is the acquisition of a stronger feeling of trust than its opposite, mistrust. The ability to rely on others is crucial as the foundation for healthy personality development. One way to establish this trust is through the mother-child relationship. A strong and consistent relationship with the mother is central to the success of the development of this sense of trust (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). To the extent that mothers leave their children in the care of surrogates, some continuity in the mother-child relationship is lost.

This stage is followed by the development of a sense of autonomy. Feelings of autonomy are encouraged by a continuity of associations developed previously. Mothers who enter the labor force at this stage break this continuity, which is still critical to the developing child. During this period, children also acquire their earliest sense of independence. Alternatively, children may develop feelings of shame and doubt. In this instance, children doubt their own competence and

autonomy. Continuity in mother-child relationships provides a foundation for the evolution of feelings of independence (Kagan, 1984).

By the time children enter school, a third stage has passed. Critical at this point is the development of a feeling of initiative or the ability to have some control over the events in their lives. Children also acquire feelings of self-esteem. The negative side of this phase of development is the feeling of guilt. When this feeling dominates, children suffer a loss of self-esteem. Erikson (1982) supports the view that the major outer influence in children's development remains the family, especially the mother.

The elementary school-age years have been termed the period of latency (Erikson, 1950). During this time, children expand their range of significant others to include increasing numbers of individuals outside the family. If mothers choose this period to enter the labor force, the danger is that the child may be overburdened with too many new elements in life. This may cause children to feel overwhelmed by their suddenly enlarged circle of relationships (Kagan & Moss, 1962).

Another psychosocial task during this period is to develop a sense of industry. Children must learn to feel competent outside the family because, according to Erikson (1950), they have "experienced a sense of finality regarding the fact that there is no workable future within the womb of the family" (p. 227). The alternative to the sense of industry is the feeling of inferiority. For children dominated by a sense of inferiority, feelings of inadequacy and mediocrity are confirmed (Kagan, 1984). Continued support of parents, especially mothers, in helping children achieve this sense of competence is important for children's success (Rollins & Thomas, 1979).

The stage of adolescence involves the development of a sense of identity (Kagan, 1984). According to Erikson (1982), this is a period characterized by a struggle in which the task is to synthesize an individual identity from a number of influences which include "constitutional givens, idiosyncratic libidinal needs, favored capacities, significant identifications, effective defenses, successful sublimations, and consistent roles" (p. 74). Children who are unable to develop this identity suffer from "role confusion." This is the

inability to feel a sense of inner continuity between one's self-image and various roles. Throughout this period, mothers continue to provide a sense of continuity for their children. As teenagers develop their own values and aspirations, mothers serve as a role model (Levin & Arluke, 1983). The mother who is gainfully employed provides a different role model from the one who is not (Vanfossen, 1977). Furthermore, if mothers are spending a significant amount of time away from home during this period, there is less opportunity to influence the attitudes of their children (Felson & Gottfredson, 1984).

The successful evolution of personality has particular needs of socializers at each stage of development. During the preschool years, a sense of trust is accomplished by providing a continuity in socializers (Kagan, 1984). The school-age years require careful introduction into a society larger than the family. Adolescents must integrate various data into the emerging adult personality. One source of these data is role models. Role models impart important cues for behaviors and attitudes in the form of their own actions and beliefs.

Erikson (1982) argues that the most important factor throughout children's psychosocial development is the home atmosphere. More specifically, the quality of the parent-child relationship is pivotal in personality development. Children who have strong positive relationships with their parents are likely to develop healthy self-identities. Children who experience consistent home environments are likely to view their world as reliable and trustworthy. Maternal employment, inasmuch as it results in a different home environment from the one provided by mothers who are not employed, may have various consequences for children.

The Influence of Gender

Behavioral differences between the sexes are observable from birth (Bardwick, 1971). There is considerable evidence to suggest the existence of constitutional variation in males and females. Systematic observations of responses and activity throughout childhood indicate such differences. Some of these are apparent before socialization or other environmental effects could alter the behaviors of the children. Observations of neonates indicate that males exhibit higher levels of wakefulness and motor activity (Phillips, King, & DuBois, 1978).

By one year, males and females demonstrate even greater specificity with respect to preferences of activity and stimulus (Bardwick, 1971).

Moving to the preschool years and beyond, there is still a range of differences which seem to be linked to the sex of a child. The consistency of results over time is provocative. Male children demonstrate higher levels of aggressive behavior than females (Block, 1983; Roopnarine, 1984). Furthermore, this type of behavior is apparently more stable and consistent among males than among females (Kagan & Moss, 1962). Block (1983) postulates that sex-appropriate behaviors and attitudes permeate many areas of socialization. For example, many of the games children play are heavily favored by one sex or the other (Lever, 1976, 1978). This is the case during the preschool years, elementary school years, and high school years. Similarly, many attitudes seem to remain influenced by the sex of the child throughout these periods.

To recapitulate, during each stage in the psychosocial development of children, mothers or their surrogates serve a somewhat different yet important

purpose (Smith, 1984). The experiences of children socialized primarily by their mothers as opposed to the experiences of those socialized by a variety of individuals--caretakers, for example--should be manifest in observable differences between the two groups. There is also reason to predict that some outcomes of maternal employment are mediated by the sex of the child.

Areas of Socialization

On the basis of the theoretical framework presented in this chapter, it was possible to derive testable hypotheses. These hypotheses, formally presented in Chapter IV, focus on two influences in the socialization process. The first was concerned with the effect of mothers on their children's acquisition of attitudes. The second line of inquiry attended to the differences in males and females with regard to differences in the socialization process.

Acquisition of Attitudes

One direct method of socialization is to provide a set of rules. Some behaviors are mandatory, others are prohibited. However, such explicit socialization covers only a small portion of situations about which children must make decisions. Children must also be given a set

of broader guidelines. These guide their decisions throughout life. These general guidelines may be thought of as a system of values. Kluckhohn (1961) has defined values as "a selective orientation toward experience, implying a deep commitment or repudiation, which influences ordering of 'choices' between possible alternatives in action" (p. 18).

By internalizing a set of values, children are equipped to make a wide variety of decisions throughout life. Parsons (1964) argues that the indoctrination of children with a system of values is of paramount importance to their socialization. The process of acquiring a system of values is influenced by a variety of factors, one of which is the array of individuals who are influential in the acquisition process itself.

Individuals primarily socialized by a single person should reflect values similar to those of the socializer due to the heavy influence of that individual (Levin & Arluke, 1983). Conversely, individuals socialized by several persons should have a more diffuse set of values, reflecting socialization from a number of individuals. Thus, children who are socialized primarily by their mothers should have values which are closer to

those of their mothers than the values of children who have been socialized by a variety of people. On the other hand, the values of children of employed mothers should reflect the input from a number of caretakers.

Values themselves may be difficult to identify. Some values are manifested in the attitudes one expresses (Kluckhohn, 1961). One way to estimate the influence of parental values on children's values is to compare the congruence of attitudes expressed by parents with those expressed by their children.

Theoretically, it has been posited that the mother-child relationship is of primary importance in children's evolution of a system of values. Recall Erikson's (1982) emphasis on the influence of a stable and strong relationship between parents and their children as central to the development of a healthy personality. Any change in the mother-child relationship may have consequences for children in the degree to which the attitudes they express are influenced by those of their mothers.

Sex Role Socialization

Sets of behaviors and attitudes defined as appropriate for males and females are called sex roles

(Damon, 1983). Because different expectations are held for males and females (McIntire, 1983), an important part of socialization for children is the acquisition of an appropriate sex-role orientation. Social learning theorists argue that sex role orientation is acquired through a number of ways including observation of others, role modeling, and reinforcement of sex-appropriate behaviors (Marcus & Overton, 1978; Mischel, 1970). Children often model their behaviors and attitudes after individuals of the same sex with whom they identify. A number of theorists speculate that parents are the most influential of these role models (Damon, 1983). As children identify with their parents, they absorb the attitudes and behaviors which they have observed in them, especially the parent of the same sex (McIntire, Hass, & Dreyer, 1972).

Social learning theorists also point out that children acquire their sex role orientations from sources other than parents. Among others, Kagan (1975) has noted the importance of other children and adults to whom children look as role models. It can be said that, to an important extent, children acquire their sex role orientations from their parents in two ways:

observing the models their parents present, and observing role models their parents permit them to be exposed to. Maternal employment should also affect this process of acquisition in that sons and daughters of working mothers are presented with a different role model than children of nonworking mothers. This should also influence children's sex role orientations.

Mothers who remain at home present a particular maternal image for their children. For daughters, the relationship is fairly obvious. Mothers who do not work represent what may be termed a traditional model for their daughters. Assuming paternal employment, sons also receive a traditional model as fathers go outside the home to work.

The situation for families in which the mother is employed is somewhat different. Sons and daughters are presented with a different role model. Rather than the traditional division of labor between mother and father, in this case the parents' models represent an overlap in the instrumental and affective roles. Employed mothers present their children with different models that should in turn affect the sex role orientation of children. There may also be other consequences of maternal

employment for the sex role orientation of children, some of which may be especially important for sons or daughters. Also, in families where mothers are employed, children are cared for by substitutes. This changes the situation with regard to other sources of role models to whom children are exposed. Children in group care settings encounter a wider variety of peers, some of whom may behave in ways parents would prefer them not to model. This exposure to a greater range of peer relationships may have important consequences, especially for sons. Also, because of the different sex role models working mothers present for their children, the sex role orientation of these children --especially daughters--may differ from that of children whose mothers are not employed.

Impact of Maternal Employment on Behavior, Especially of Sons

It has been established that males exhibit certain characteristics differently than females (Block, 1983). For example, male children demonstrate higher levels of aggressive behavior than females (Roopnarine, 1984). There is also evidence that the pressure to exhibit sex-appropriate behaviors is stronger for males than for

females (Currant, Dickson, Anderson, & Faulkner, 1979). It is more acceptable for a girl to be a "tomboy" than it is for a boy to be a "sissy."

One way boys meet this pressure is through physical activities (Lever, 1978). Some of this sex-appropriate activity is channeled in socially acceptable directions, such as little league sports. However, other activities are socially unacceptable according to adult standards, such as disruptive behavior. Such positive and negative behaviors may be equally praiseworthy in the social world of young males. Furthermore, research has shown that children in daycare settings are more desirous of peer acceptance--i.e., peer-oriented--than those raised primarily by their mothers (Moore, 1975; Schachter, 1981). Thus, boys who spend a significant amount of time in daycare centers may adopt more of these aggressive behaviors than boys who are more heavily socialized by their mothers (McIntire 1983).

When socialization involves persons other than parents, as in the case of maternal employment, children are apt to experience more exposure to peers. In this case, a greater proportion of children's sex role orientations is derived from peers (Kagan, 1975).

The aggressive and impulsive behaviors exhibited by males deviate more from those that are defined as socially acceptable by adults than the behaviors exhibited by girls (Block, 1983). To the extent that males' socialization is influenced by their same-sex peers, also less conforming than their female counterparts, the task of socialization in behaviors appropriate by adult standards is more difficult.

Impact of Maternal Employment on Sex Roles, Especially of Daughters

This chapter has presented the theoretical argument that the mother-child relationship is a powerful force in the socialization of children. Another variable which is important in the socialization of children, especially with regard to sex roles, is the role models that parents present to their children (Damon, 1983). Theorists have speculated that, due to the particular importance of the same-sex parent as a role model, mothers should be more influential on their daughters than on their sons.

Maternal employment, which alters the mother-child relationship, may also alter the influence of mothers as sex-role models for their daughters. However, the

circumstance of surrogate care itself may ameliorate some of the loss. Most substitute caregivers, such as babysitters and daycare center workers, are females. Caregivers are often role models to the children they supervise. Because most of them are women, this may be particularly important for girls. In effect, these workers provide daughters with a role model of working women, relatively the same role model as their employed mothers. Thus, the loss of influence that employed mothers have on their daughters' sex role orientations may be made up, at least partially, by their surrogates--employed women themselves.

It has been assumed that mothers have an important role in the socialization of their children. Children who have been socialized primarily by their mothers should be different in some aspects from those who have been socialized by a number of persons. These effects may vary according to the age and sex of the child. Such effects should be evident in various beliefs and behavior patterns expressed by children. First, nonworking mothers should be more influential than working mothers in the attitudes expressed by their children. Evidence of this would be a higher degree of congruence between

the attitudes of children and their nonemployed mothers than among children and their employed mothers. Their socialization experiences should also result in observable differences in their behaviors and sex role orientations.

CHAPTER III
REVIEW OF RESEARCH

Increased numbers of mothers have moved into the labor force in recent years. Researchers have responded by investigating numerous aspects of the issue. Two summaries provide an overview of the research which has attempted to link maternal employment with various outcomes for children. In addition to serving as an introduction to the topic, some methodological shortcomings are also identified in these reviews. Following these summaries, particular pieces of research that provide insight for the present analysis are discussed.

Research Summaries

Hoffman (1974), synthesizing the body of research through the first part of the 1970s, points to several important theoretical and methodological shortcomings. Bronfenbrenner and Crouter (1982) followed up Hoffman's work by providing an assessment of the progress made through the 1970s and into the 1980s. In so doing, they indicate directions for the next decade.

Research to 1974: Hoffman's Review

Hoffman's (1974) work identifies research findings and spells out some theoretical and methodological shortcomings of those findings. She also suggested avenues for future research.

To organize the research, Hoffman developed five hypotheses which have been the concerns of most of the studies.

1. Working mothers provide different role models from nonworking mothers.

2. Employment affects the mothers' emotional states positively or negatively (satisfaction versus role strain and guilt), which in turn affects the mother-child relationship.

3. Demands of both job and home as well as the emotional state of the working mother affect child-rearing practices.

4. Working mothers provide less adequate supervision for their children than do nonworking mothers.

5. The working mothers' absence results in emotional and possibly cognitive deprivation for children.

Hoffman concluded that, although the evidence is sketchy and inadequate, there is some support for the

first four propositions. The fifth was not supported by research findings.

Hoffman identified three dependent variables on which most of the studies have been centered:

1. The children's social attitudes and values;

2. The children's general mental health and adjustment, with particular emphasis on the degree of independence;

3. The cognitive abilities, motivation, and intellectual performance of children.

In nearly all cases, the single independent variable has been maternal employment. She argued that such simplistic research problems were not likely to produce realistic estimates of the relationships.

Hoffman's review suggests the need for clearer specification of variables--independent, dependent, and control. She also suggests that future research be guided by theory. Extensions of current understandings may best be accomplished through three changes in research strategy. A more detailed specification of maternal employment variables will provide greater insight regarding any effect of maternal employment. Further attention should be given to increasing the range of possible outcomes for children including attitudes and behaviors.

There is also a need to more fully examine the effects that such covariates as social class may have on outcomes for children.

Research to 1982: Bronfenbrenner and Crouter

Bronfenbrenner and Crouter (1982) reviewed psychological and sociological research on maternal employment and children in 1982. They divided the literature into items published before and after 1960. This date was selected for two reasons. Around that time, the women's movement was beginning to have some influence on labor decisions of women. Also, researchers were then able to crystallize issues of concern regarding maternal employment and its various consequences.

The authors suggest directions that future inquiries should take, both methodologically and substantively. They note that most of the research to date has focused on just two issues:

1. The comparison of characteristics of children whose mothers work with those whose mothers do not work;

2. The impact of work on the attitudes and actions of working mothers.

According to Bronfenbrenner and Crouter, the problem with such studies is that they appear to assume that

families live in a social vacuum, unaffected by outside influences. In the future, they suggest a focus on the family milieu and other broader aspects of the environment which surround children.

Bronfenbrenner and Crouter (1982) also point out a number of variables that might mediate any impact of maternal employment, one or more of which are usually missing from analyses. Included among them are sex and age of children, race, family structure, social class, and maternal attitude toward work.

There is an especially strong need for a fuller specification of the social class variable. In almost all social science research, social class seems influential. Family income, one aspect of social class, shifts upward to some degree when a second paycheck is added to the family income. This factor may not affect all families in the same way. Benefits of the additional income may be greater or different according to the family. Rather than using a single measure of class such as income, the authors suggest inclusion of such factors as the education of both parents, occupation, and proportional contributions to the family income. By combining a number of

factors for a more detailed measure of class, Bronfenbrenner and Crouter (1982) predict that the importance of this variable may become clearer.

Another important consideration is the possible existence of delayed impact on the children. While longitudinal studies are ideally suited to this purpose, cross-sectional studies of late adolescents or young adults may provide considerable insight. Studies examining adolescents in the context of their mothers' work history may be particularly illuminating in tracing relationships between stages of children's lives and impacts of maternal employment. Use of such data sets provides one way of charting variations among children according to the extent to which their mothers were gainfully employed during various periods in their lives.

The guidelines suggested by Bronfenbrenner and Crouter, along with those of Hoffman (1974), provide direction for this analysis. The data set (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1980) enables one to address a number of methodological problems discussed by these reviews. The present study was able to use several control variables in addition to those which measure the extent of maternal employment. Furthermore, the measure of social

class used in this analysis (see Chapter IV) is a composite variable that includes a number of items. Also, this study was able to explore the relationship between maternal employment and its outcomes for children on the basis of the age of children during mothers' employment. Various work patterns may affect preschool children in different ways or degrees than they affect adolescents. There is also the possibility of delayed effects. By studying outcomes for high school students on the basis of past maternal employment history, it is possible to examine differences among students whose mothers have worked throughout their lives and those whose mothers have more recently entered the labor force. Another consideration is the extent of employment. Logic suggests that part time work while children are in school will have a different effect from full time employment.

Attitudinal Development

One hypothesis predicts that, as maternal employment increases, the influence of maternal attitudes on those of the children should decrease. This hypothesis is based on the assumption that, as maternal employment increases, the relationship between mothers and their children will change. Most research has focused on

various ways in which maternal employment affects the general orientation of children, such as peer versus adult orientation. While such findings do not directly reflect on maternal influence, they do suggest that the focus of influence may vary according to maternal work patterns. When children are focused more toward one group than another (parents or peers), that group should be more influential in their attitude orientations.

Moore (1975) used a longitudinal study to investigate possible impacts of maternal employment on children. He divided 167 middle-class children into two groups. One group had been in the care of someone other than their mother for at least 25 hours per week for a minimum of one year before age 5. Moore defined these children as having been diffusely mothered. The second group comprised children who were cared for solely by their mothers up to age 5. This second group he termed exclusively mothered. The children were interviewed at the ages of 6, 7, 9, and 15. Observations were also conducted at these times. Mothers of children in both groups were interviewed when their children were age 6, 7, 8, and 15.

Moore's findings indicated that children reared

exclusively appeared more adult-like in their behaviors. For example, they tended to be more conforming, restrained, and fastidious than the diffusely mothered group. However, these children also appeared more dependent on adults; they seemed more anxious to win the approval of the teacher and more concerned about being reprimanded by their parents.

Moore's (1975) findings were corroborated by Schachter (1981). She focused on differences between toddlers with employed mothers and those with nonemployed mothers; 32 children whose mothers were full time employees were matched with 38 children whose mothers did not work outside the home. The groups were compared on cognitive development using a Stanford-Binet test series. Observations provided evidence as to the social development of the children. Emotional development was estimated through the use of Q-Sort Ideal Comparisons measures.

Schachter (1981) found, as did Moore (1975), that the exclusively reared children generally interacted more often with adults than those who were diffusely socialized. According to Schachter, these results are consistent with previous research. On the other hand, older children with employed mothers and/or those in

daycare (many of whose mothers work) were found to be more peer-oriented.

Ragozin (1980) conducted naturalistic observations of 20 middle-class daycare children and 17 middle-class home-reared children. All of the subjects were aged 17-20 months. The author observed the children in strange situation settings in order to estimate attachment to the mother. She found that those children in daycare settings exhibited more avoidance behaviors upon reunion with their mothers than the home-reared children. Furthermore, the daycare group demonstrated more generalized responses to adults. Ragozin hypothesized that this may be due to the children having fewer adult contacts.

Gold and Andres (1980) compared 379 ten-year-old children on the basis of maternal work patterns. They contrasted groups of Canadian francophone children from working-class and middle-class backgrounds on a variety of characteristics. One area of investigation was parental ratings of the children's personality adjustment. Their research findings indicated that middle-class mothers who were employed described their daughters as more cooperative than those of mothers who were not

employed. Within the working-class group, employed mothers characterized their daughters as more outgoing and independent than unemployed mothers. Also, among working-class families, mothers who were employed were less likely to describe their sons as domineering. Maternal employment had no apparent effect on fathers' ratings of their children or on the type and number of problems parents reported having with their children.

Gold and Andres (1980) also reported a relationship between class and satisfaction within employment categories. Middle-class mothers who worked appeared to be the most contented group. This finding was similar to those of their earlier study (1978A). Also, as in the 1978A study, middle-class mothers who worked seemed to be the most satisfied. Middle-class non-working women appeared to be the least content. The sons of employed working-class women were less content than middle-class sons or working-class sons whose mothers did not work.

The conclusions of Hoffman (1979) that social class is influential in determining how children are affected by maternal employment provide one explanation for the findings of Gold and Andres. Hoffman reviewed a number

of findings which implied that the impact of maternal employment for male children was mediated by class. Working-class males whose mothers are employed seem to have lower levels of admiration for their fathers than those whose mothers do not work or than those of higher class. The presumption she made was that there is a negative assessment by the sons of the fathers' success in the provider role.

Propper (1972) found that high school students with working mothers reported more areas of disagreement with their parents than those whose mothers did not work. Her sample consisted of 229 secondary school students. The questionnaire focused on student activities and parent-child relationships. Propper found indications of greater numbers of disagreements with parents among the group whose mothers were employed. However, there seemed to be no difference in the perception of closeness or in the feelings of affection between parents and their children in the two groups.

During the preschool years, children whose mothers work exhibit less attachment to their mothers than children of nonworking mothers. These children also seem to display stronger peer orientations than those whose

mothers did not work. Regarding school-age children, the parent-child relationship does not appear fundamentally different from that of families where the mother is not employed. Although high school students with working mothers indicate more areas of disagreement with their parents, they do not report feeling less close to them. Thus, there is little evidence of lasting differences in the relationships between parents and their children on the basis of maternal employment patterns.

Behavioral Differences

Another concern of the study reported here is that there may be behavioral differences in children on the basis of maternal employment patterns. More specifically, children of working women should exhibit more behaviors which are defined as less socially acceptable behaviors than children of nonworking women. This may be especially important for sons. Previous research suggests that such outcomes may occur before children are of school age; however, as time passes, the manifestations of these early differences become more difficult to estimate.

Vlietstra (1981) used teacher ratings and observations to contrast the behaviors of 17 half-day students with those of 20 full-day students. All children were

between the ages of 2.5 and 4.5 years. The full-day students' mothers worked, whereas those attending only part-time did so for enrichment purposes only. Her findings indicated that full-day children exhibited more active and aggressive behavior. On the other hand, the half-day students seemed to be more cooperative and less disruptive in the classroom setting.

Schachter (1981) found that children of working mothers were generally more peer-oriented. They were approached more often by their peers and engaged in physical interaction more often than other children. Teachers rated the children of working women as being more independent and less jealous than children of nonworking mothers.

D'Amico, Haurin, and Mott (1983) reported only sporadic associations between maternal employment and educational outcomes for children. They used two subsamples drawn from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Labor Market Experience. These consist of two surveys, one for young men taken in 1966 with repeated interviews until 1981; this survey was begun when these males were between the ages of 16 and 18. The other survey comprised women aged 14-17 and was administered in 1968;

the group was followed until 1983. The subsamples used by D'Amico et al. (1983) were two sets of matched pairs. One was a group of 784 mothers and daughters; the other was a group of 768 mothers and sons. They were repeatedly interviewed between 1968 and 1978.

The findings of this latter study suggest that the most pervasive impact of maternal employment on the educational attainment of children seemed to be during the preschool years. When the mother was employed during the preschool years, there was a lower probability of the son's completing high school. However, as mothers worked a greater number of years from the birth of the first child, the likelihood that the sons would complete high school increased. D'Amico et al. also found that, if maternal employment does affect academic performance, it does so only modestly and indirectly. The findings were consistent for males and females.

During the preschool years, children exhibit differences in behavior according to the extent of their mothers' work. Children of working women seem more aggressive, independent, and peer-oriented. Beyond this period in children's lives, there are no clear indications of such differences. The analysis presented in

this work, using the High School and Beyond (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1980) data, may provide some insight into differences in children during their adolescent years.

Sex Role Orientation

Another concern of the present research is whether maternal employment affects the sex role orientations of children. More precisely, children of working women should reflect a different sex role orientation from that evidenced by children of nonworking women. Research on this relationship has provided mixed results. Unfortunately, there is no research on this subject which particularly examines effects on preschool children.

Gold and Andres (1978B) found that 10-year-old boys of working-class mothers experience greater difficulty in sex role identification than those whose mothers did not work. These boys were more often described negatively by their fathers, had poorer grades and peer relations, and were rated more shy and nervous than sons of nonworking mothers.

Gold and Andres (1978A) studied a group of 253 students aged 14-16. Their analysis was limited to intact nuclear families. Members of the sample were

categorized into working and middle class. They were also grouped according to maternal employment status, employed or nonemployed. There was some indication that the sex role concepts of children of working mothers were more androgynous than those of nonworking mothers. However, the difference was not as strong as had been found in a previous study (Gold & Andres, 1978B) with 10-year-old children.

Banducci (1967) studied a sample of 3,014 high school seniors. He utilized the school records of the group and also administered questionnaires to them. His findings provide information regarding academic achievement and aspirations and plans for future employment. His results indicated that teenage girls with working mothers were more likely to report future plans that included combining career and family. The D'Amico et al. (1983) study also drew some conclusions on the impact of maternal employment on the career orientations of sons and daughters. Their findings indicated that maternal employment during daughters' preschool years was associated with those girls who expressed a more traditional orientation. However, there seemed to be little impact on long-range career plans.

D'Amico et al. (1983) noted that, "more surprising is the absence of any strong or pervasive role-modeling influences, especially on daughters' work-related plans and ambitions than we might have expected" (p. 163). For males, there seemed to be an inverse relationship between work status of the mother during the preschool years and adult occupational status.

Hoffman (1979), in surveying the literature on maternal employment, noted the importance of considering findings in the context of concurrent changes in society. Her analysis suggests that the literature provides a fairly clear indication that daughters of working mothers differ from those of mothers who stay at home in several important ways. She has concluded that daughters of employed women hold the female role in higher esteem than daughters of women who do not work. They also appear to have higher levels of social, personal, and educational adjustment. Daughters of women who work tend to be higher achievers and exhibit more positive adjustments than daughters of nonworking women. According to Hoffman, this may also be the case for males. There is some implication that sons of working mothers are better

adjusted and higher achievers than those whose mothers stay home.

While some studies have reported differences in career orientation on the basis of maternal employment, the majority of research findings do not support this relationship. Daughters have been found to exhibit more positive personal and social adjustment when their mothers work. Sons and daughters seem more androgynous in their orientations if their mothers are employed. However, research suggests that this may diminish with time. The analysis described in this paper explores the nature of these relationships more fully.

This review of past research has highlighted findings in two ways. Research summaries including research through the 1970s summarized findings and identified deficiencies of numerous studies. Specifically, three methodological criticisms of previous research in these summaries were addressed using the data in High School and Beyond (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1980). Many studies have been limited in that a single measure of maternal employment has been the only independent variable. This study made use of a number of influential variables, permitting a fuller specification of relationships among

them. Second, the measure of social class used in the present study was a combination of a number of factors rather than the single estimate used in most other analyses. Third, an examination of the High School and Beyond data permitted an analysis of maternal employment patterns and their effects on children through various periods in children's lives rather than effects at only one point in time.

CHAPTER IV
METHODOLOGY

It has been posited that the relationship between mothers and children is crucial to the children's socialization. The importance of this relationship begins at birth and continues through adolescence (Erikson, 1950, 1982). If the relationship between working mothers and their children is different from that established by non-working mothers and their children, there should be observable differences between children on the basis of maternal work patterns.

However, empirical studies to date have largely failed to support this line of reasoning. It has been suggested by a number of experts (among whom Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1982; Hoffman, 1979) that various methodological issues must be resolved in future studies. The present analysis tests certain hypotheses drawn from the theory presented in Chapter II. This study also responds to various shortcomings of past research which were

discussed in Chapter III. This was accomplished by using the data set of the U.S. Dept. of Education, High School and Beyond (1980). This data set is drawn from a national sample of high school students. The set also contains information regarding maternal work history and a multifaceted operationalization of the social class variable.

This chapter formally presents the specific research hypotheses of this study, followed by the operationalizations of variables used to test the hypotheses. The items drawn from the data set are also discussed. Finally, the specific methods used in this analysis are reviewed.

Hypotheses

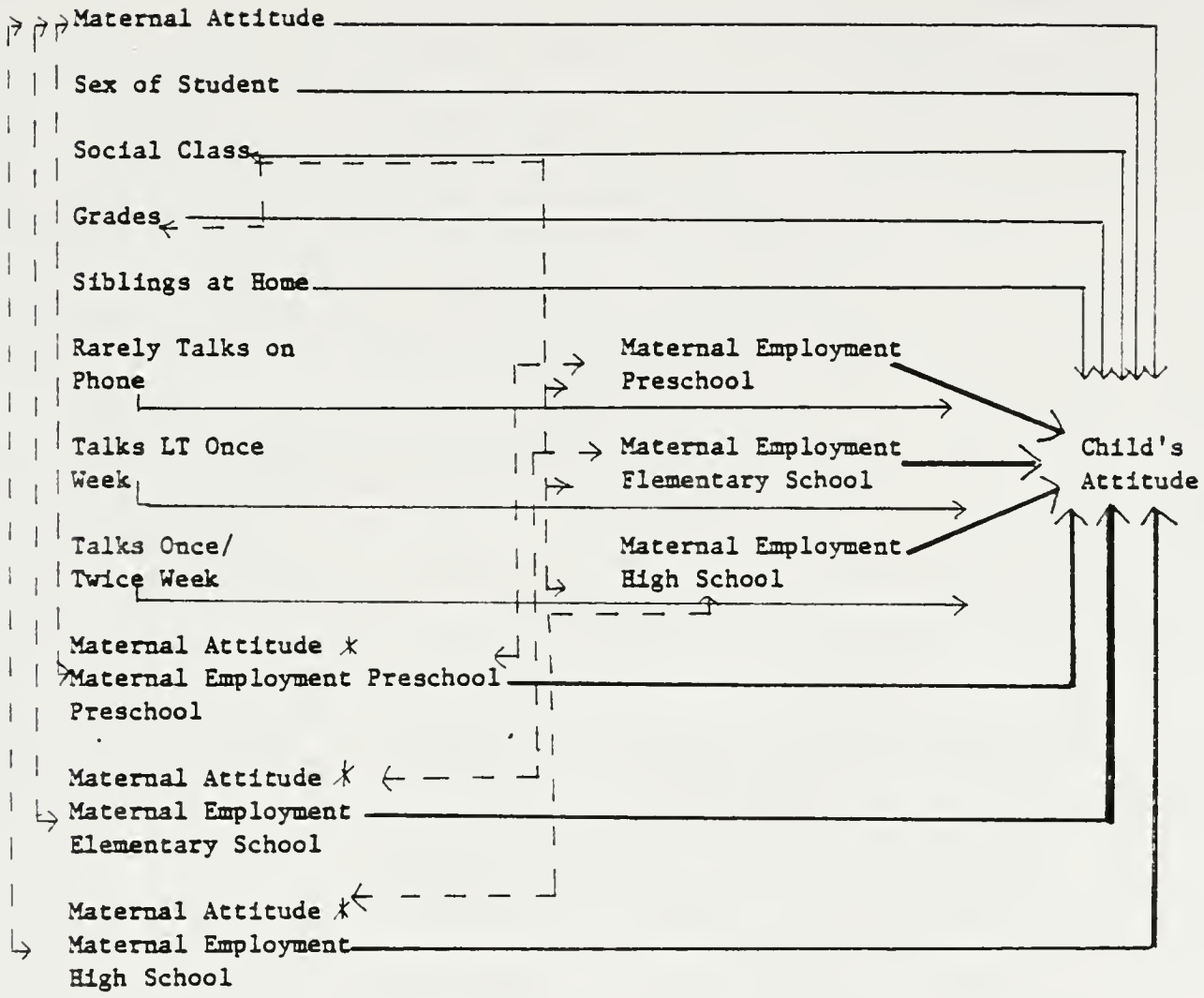
The theory reviewed in Chapter II suggests a range of relationships from which testable hypotheses might be drawn. This study explored two of these. One hypothesis links maternal work patterns to the extent to which mothers influence the attitudes of their children. The other hypothesis explores effects of maternal work patterns on school-related behaviors and one aspect of children's sex role orientations.

Maternal Influence on Children's Attitudes

Maternal influence is measured by the extent to which mothers' attitudes are congruent with children's attitudes. Mothers should be more influential in shaping children's attitudes when they are more constantly involved in the children's socialization (Kagan, 1984). Conversely, when socialization is divided among a number of caretakers, as in the case of employed mothers, the influence of each on the process should be less.

Hypothesis 1. The attitude congruence between mothers and children regarding maternal employment diminishes as maternal employment increases.

The model used to test this hypothesis included a number of covariates which other research has linked to the relationship between maternal employment and maternal influence on the attitudes of children. These include: students' sex (Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1982), social class (Bloom-Feshbach, Bloom-Feshbach, & Heller, 1982), academic achievement (Messaris & Hornik, 1983), and peer affiliation (Berndt, 1983) (see Figure 1).



———— = Relationships tested

_____ = Relationships included in this model but not tested

-------- = Relationships assumed but not tested

Figure 1. Relationship of the Congruence of Maternal Attitudes and Those of Children on the Basis of Maternal Employment.

This model also contained three interaction terms, each of which measures the influence of the cross-product of two independent variables on the dependent variable (Agresti & Agresti, 1979). In this model, the interaction terms test the extent to which three maternal employment variables--mothers' work during their children's preschool years, elementary school years, and high school years--affect the influence of mothers' attitudes on those of their children. The hypothesis predicted that the influence of maternal attitudes would diminish as the amount of time mothers were employed increased. Significance of the interaction terms would also provide support for the hypothesis.

Another test of this hypothesis compared the influence of those mothers who worked full time throughout their children's lives with the influence of mothers who had never worked. This type of comparison is called a test of extreme cases. According to the hypothesis, the influence of mothers who have never worked should be significantly stronger than that of mothers who have worked full time throughout their children's lives.

Effects on Children's Behaviors and Attitudes

Chapter II presented a line of reasoning which led to the prediction that maternal employment affects behaviors and attitudes of children. One premise of social learning theory is that children are socialized by their role models and their observations of others (Kagan, 1975). Children whose mothers are employed are exposed to different role models than those children whose mothers are not employed. Children of working women spend an important part of their time with and are socialized in part by caregivers other than their mothers. These children also spend an important part of their time in the company of their peers, who also contribute to their socialization. On the other hand, children whose mothers do not work are socialized primarily by their mothers. The differing nature of these socializing experiences, caregivers and peers versus mothers, manifests different behaviors and attitudes in children. The rationale on which the subhypotheses are based suggests the importance of the child's sex. The behaviors of sons should be more affected by maternal work patterns than the behaviors of daughters. Daughters should be influenced more than sons by the role models presented

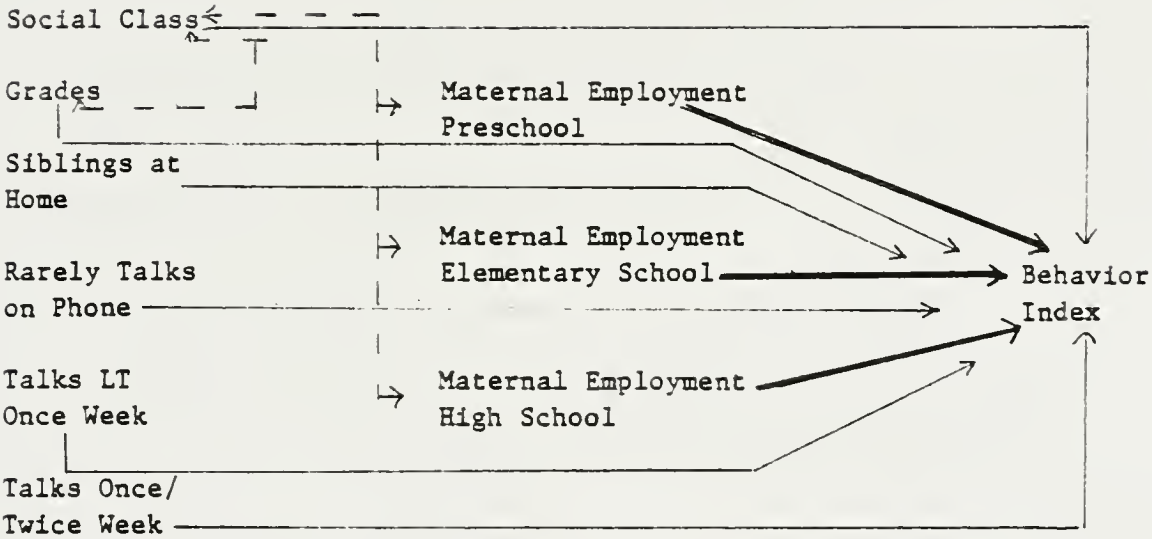
by their parents. These subhypotheses will test males and females separately.

Hypothesis 2. Particular behaviors and attitudes of children will differ on the basis of their mothers' employment patterns:

A. Maternal employment patterns directly affect the degree to which children exhibit school-related behaviors which are defined as not acceptable by the schools.

B. Maternal employment patterns affect the sex role orientations expressed by children.

Children's behavior. In Chapter II, it was reasoned that, as a portion of socialization was accomplished by peers rather than mothers, children would reflect this in their behaviors; that is, children socialized in part by peers would be more conforming to standards set by peers than those set by adults (McIntire et al., 1972). Boys exhibit more aggressive behavior (Mischel, 1970) whereas girls' behaviors appear more passive and compliant (Duvall & Miller, 1985). Thus, changes in behavior which are affected by these different patterns of socialization due to maternal work patterns may be more apparent in boys than in girls. Figure 2 presents the model used to test Hypothesis 2A.



——— = Relationships tested

_____ = Relationships included in this model but not tested

-------- = Relationships assumed but not tested

Figure 2. Relationship of Maternal Employment to Non-conforming Behavior Index--Males and Females Tested Separately.

Previous research suggests that a number of factors may be important in explaining the relationship between maternal employment and nonconforming behavior. These include sex (Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1982), social class (Bloom-Feshbach et al., 1983), family size (D'Amico et al., 1983), academic achievement (Heynes, 1982), and peer affiliation (Jurich & Andrews, 1984).

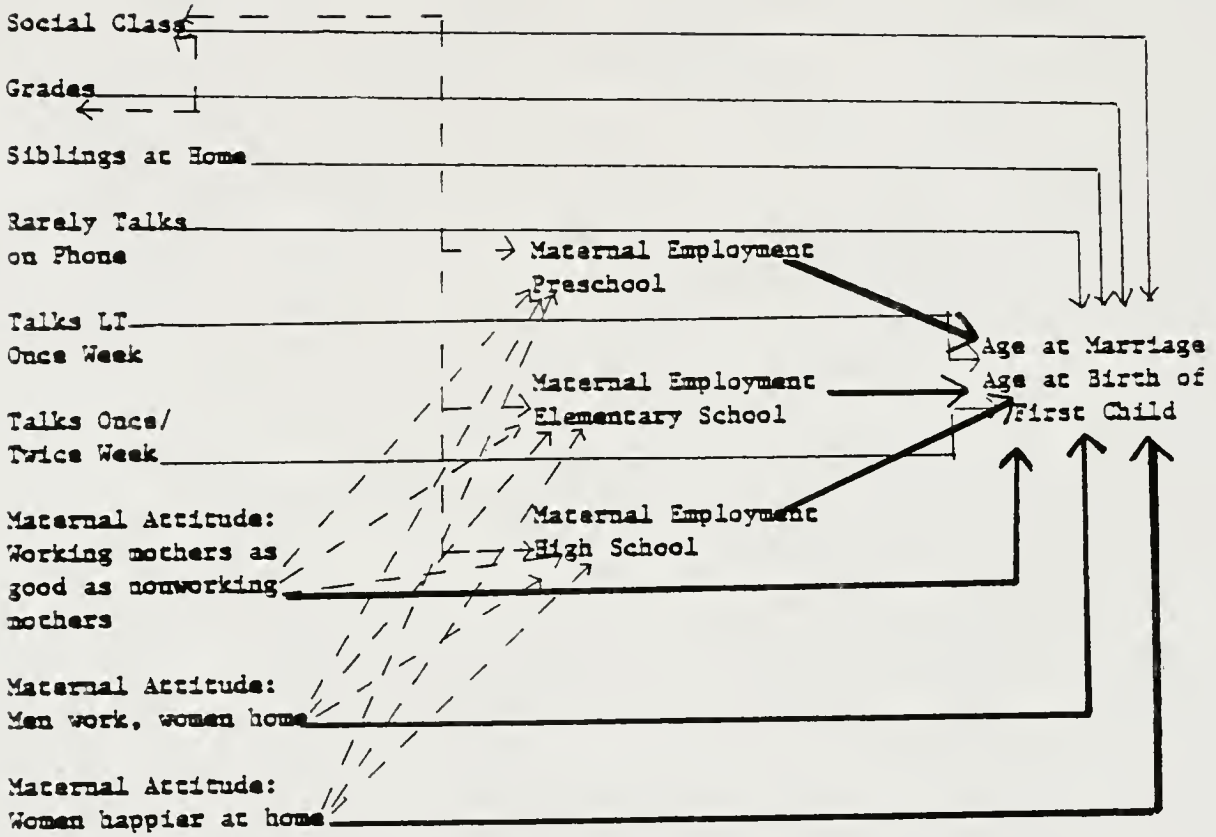
Children's sex role orientation. Sex role orientation was defined in Chapter II as one's beliefs concerning behaviors and attitudes appropriate for males and females. One way in which sex role orientation is acquired is through role models. Children's beliefs as to appropriate behaviors for males and females are based in part on their observations of the behaviors of those around them, particularly their parents (Kagan, 1975). Working mothers provide a different role model for their children than nonworking mothers.

Chapter II also emphasized the importance of the mother-child bond to children's acquisition of values, which are manifest in attitudes. It would seem, then, that working mothers--inasmuch as separation of mothers and their children weakens the mother-child bond--are less effective as role models than nonworking mothers.

However, when mothers work, children are placed in the care of surrogate mothers, usually working women themselves. As these caregivers also serve as role models, some of the loss of the maternal role model of a working mother may be ameliorated by these surrogates. Figure 3 displays the model used to test Hypothesis 2B.

The research of others has suggested a number of variables that may further clarify the relationship between maternal employment and children's sex role orientations. These include social class (Bloom-Feshbach et al., 1983), family size (D'Amico et al., 1983), academic achievement (Heynes, 1982), peer affiliation (Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1982), and parental attitudes regarding maternal employment (Reid & Stephens, 1985; Smith & Self, 1980).

A central theme in the theoretical perspectives from which these hypotheses were drawn is the importance of the mother-child relationship to children's socialization. Thus, maternal influence in the socialization process should diminish as women work more throughout their children's lives, inasmuch as employment diminishes the extent to which mothers have primary control in that process. From this, it can be predicted that the


Social Class
Grades
Siblings at Home
Rarely Talks on Phone
Talks LT Once Week
Talks Once/ Twice Week
Maternal Attitude: Working mothers as good as nonworking mothers
Maternal Attitude: Men work, women home
Maternal Attitude: Women happier at home
Maternal Employment Preschool
Maternal Employment Elementary School
Maternal Employment High School
Age at Marriage
Age at Birth of First Child

———— = Relationships tested

_____ = Relationships included in this model but not tested

-------- = Relationships assumed but not tested

Figure 3. Relationship of Maternal Employment to the Sex-Role Orientations of Children--Males and Females Tested Separately.

attitudes of mothers who have never worked are more influential in shaping their daughters' sex role orientations than the attitudes of mothers who have worked full time throughout their daughters' lives. This was tested by comparing the influence of maternal attitudes toward maternal employment on their daughters' career orientations for those daughters whose mothers have never worked, with those of daughters whose mothers have worked full time throughout the three periods of their daughters' lives identified in this sample.

The hypotheses specified in this study provided a range of predictions. They identified behavioral and attitudinal variations among children on the basis of maternal employment patterns. These effects were also predicted to be consistent when the effects of a number of covariates were accounted for. Such elaboration required the use of a large and comprehensive data set which would permit necessary specification. High School and Beyond (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1980) met these criteria and provided the data for use in this analysis.

Dependent Variable: Children's Attitudes

Three questions were used as dependent variables to test the hypothesis which predicted that mothers who were not employed have more influence on their children's attitudes than mothers who are employed. These questions asked students about their attitudes regarding working women.

How do you feel about each of the following statements?

A. A working mother of preschool children can be just as good a mother as the woman who does not work.

B. It is usually better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.

C. Most women are happiest when they are making a home and caring for children.

Response options were given in a Likert-type scale: agree strongly = 1; agree = 2; disagree = 3; disagree strongly = 4.

Dependent Variable: Children's Behaviors

It has been argued in Chapter II that maternal employment patterns increase the likelihood of children engaging in nonconforming behavior; i.e., deviating from socially

approved norms. The dependent variable used to test this hypothesis was operationalized as an index. This index was constructed by adding students' scores on three questions.

Are the following statements about your experiences in school true or false?

A. I have had disciplinary problems in school during the last year.

B. I have been suspended or put on probation during the last year.

C. Every once in a while I cut class.

Response choices were: true = 1; false = 2. The response of "false" was recoded to zero. By so doing, the index scores ranged from zero = all false responses to 3 = all true responses. This index provided an ordinal measure of committal of nonconfirming behavior.

Dependent Variable: Sex Role Orientation

Sex role orientation has been defined as the beliefs people hold regarding appropriate behaviors for males and females. One dimension of sex role orientation is careerism which may be defined as the extent to which people wish to delay marriage and family in favor of career development. Careerism is actually a continuum. For

those who fall on one end, the desire for marriage and family is already fulfilled or anticipated in the immediate future. Those who fall toward this end of the continuum express a traditional orientation. Those who desire to forfeit or delay indefinitely marriage and family are at the other end of this continuum. Those who fall toward this end of the continuum express a career orientation. The longer people choose to delay these events, the more career-oriented they are assumed to be. Each indicator was used separately. Students responded to the following questions:

At what age to do you expect to . . .

A. Get married?

B. Have your first child?

The responses for both questions were in years. In the original questionnaire, each year was assigned a value ranging from 3 to 16. These were recoded to the age they represented. A response code of one was assigned to those who did not expect to marry or have children. Even though this group may represent the most extreme careerists, they had to be dropped from the analysis. Since marriage and childbirth were not in their plans, there was no way to legitimately assign

them ages at which they expected these events to take place. A response originally coded 2 indicated that the students had already married or had children; they were assigned an age of 16. Those who responded 30 or older were assigned an age of 30. The use of adolescents' expectations regarding their future as measures of careerism has also been followed by Budd and Spencer (1984), D'Amico et al. (1983), and Reid and Stephens (1985).

Independent Variables: Maternal Employment

This analysis was concerned with how maternal employment might affect children. The theory presented in Chapter II and pertinent research presented in Chapter III suggest that effects of maternal employment may vary with the children's ages during the times when their mothers work (Reid & Stephens, 1985). Also, the number of hours worked may be important (Maccoby, 1980; Reid & Stephens, 1985) to outcomes for children. For instance, children whose mothers work part time may be less affected by their mothers' employment than children whose mothers work full time. The independent variables in this study permitted such period specification.

The maternal work variables examined the impact of employment during three periods of time. Each described the employment pattern during a particular stage in children's lives. These variables were operationalized using the following questions asked of parents.

Did you (your spouse) usually have a job during the period when your son/daughter was in high school?

Did you (your spouse) usually have a job during the period when your son/daughter was in elementary school?

Did you (your spouse) usually have a job during the period before your son/daughter was in elementary school?

The response categories for each of the questions were: did not work = 1; worked part time = 2; worked full time = 3.

To summarize, this study contained three maternal work variables which measured the amount of work mothers did during the years before their children went to school, during the years their children were in elementary school, and during their children's high school years.

Covariates

Previous research has suggested that a number of factors may be important to one or more of the hypotheses in this study. The following covariates were added to the equations as theory and research dictated.

A number of findings suggest that sex is influential in determining children's attitudes regarding maternal employment (Canter & Ageton, 1984; Smith, 1984). Previous research has also implicated sex of the child as an important factor in predicting the likelihood of the commission of nonconforming behaviors (Anolik, 1983; Felson & Gottfredson, 1984; Hogan & Nookherjee, 1981; Maccoby, 1980). A number of researchers have found that patterns of career orientation differ for males and females (Reid & Stephens, 1985).

This is a dichotomous variable which measures the sex of students. Females had a value of zero, males a value of one.

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement has been found to influence the attitudes of children regarding sex roles (Archer, 1985; Farmer, 1985; Reid & Stephens, 1985; Young, 1983).

There is also evidence to suggest that academic achievement is related to the likelihood of committing nonconforming behavior (Hains, 1984; Maccoby, 1980).

Parents were asked to estimate the grades their children usually received in school. Response categories represented the mid-points of numerical ranges of grades of 90-100, 85-89, 80-84, 75-79, 70-74, 65-69, 60-64, and below 60.

Social Class

Social class has been found to influence the sex role attitudes of children (Canter & Ageton, 1984; Lueptow, 1980; Vanfossen, 1977). There are also findings that suggest that social class of the child contributes to the probability of committing nonconforming behaviors (Anolik, 1983; Felson & Gottfredson, 1984; Hogan & Nookherjee, 1981; Maccoby, 1980). A number of researchers have found that students' career orientations differ according to social class (Archer, 1985; Farmer, 1985).

One strength of the data set was the detailed operationalization of the social class variable. This combines five indicators of class, and includes father's occupation, father's education, and mother's education. Income is measured by asking respondents to classify

themselves into one of seven income categories. Another component of the social class measure was the number of the following items in the family: daily newspaper, encyclopedia, typewriter, electric dishwasher, two or more cars, trucks, etc., more than 50 books, student's own room, and pocket calculator. Scores on each of these variables were standardized within grade, sophomores and seniors, then averaged to produce a range from -20 to 20. A score of zero would thus represent the mid-point of the range of values for this variable. For purposes of this analysis, these scores were divided by 100 so that the range of this variable was limited to -20 to 20.

Family Composition

Family composition has been found to be influential in the sex-role attitudes of children (Smith, 1984). This variable has also been reported to be influential in predicting the proneness toward nonconforming behavior (Hogan & Nookherjee, 1981; Maccoby, 1980).

Family composition was measured by whether or not the respondent had brothers and/or sisters living in the same household. While this does not provide a measure of complete family size, it does indicate whether

or not the responded resided as an only child in the home at the time of the survey. The response of "false" was coded zero, and "true" responses were given a value of one.

Peer Affiliation

Previous research (Kagan, 1984) has shown that peer influence may play a major role in determining the attitudes and behaviors expressed by children, especially teenagers. Young (1983) and Archer (1985) found that peer relationships played an important role in the development of sex role attitudes. Maccoby (1980) and Jurich andAndrews (1984) reported findings that suggested the importance of peers in the behaviors of children.

Although peer embeddedness is usually estimated on the basis of self-report (Berndt, 1983), such measures represent only the respondents' impressions of their own level of affiliation. Another way of assessing levels of embeddedness is to compare students on a particular behavior that suggests the extent of involvement with peers. This study used the extent to which respondents talk to their friends on the telephone. Teenagers who elect to spend more of their free time on

the telephone were presumed to be more involved in those peer relationships.

Students were asked the following question:

How frequently do you talk to your friends on the telephone?

Response choices were: rarely; less than once a week; once or twice a week; daily or almost daily.

The categories of this variable were dummied into three variables. Previous research suggests that peer affiliation has its greatest impact on those who have the strongest ties to their peers. Thus, the response "daily or almost daily" was the omitted category.

Maternal Attitudes

With regard to career orientations, several researchers (Archer, 1985; Farmer, 1985; Reid & Stephens, 1985; Smith & Self, 1980; Young, 1983) have found a relationship between the attitudes of one or both parents and the attitudes and personal aspirations expressed by their children. Although mothers' attitudes were of interest in this study, nearly half of the parental respondents were fathers. Previous studies (Acock & Yang, 1984; Lueptow, 1980), which show that fathers' attitudes are similar to those of mothers, legitimate the assumption

that attitudes of husbands are closely aligned with those of their wives. On this basis, the research reported in this dissertation assumed that paternal attitudes were appropriate proxies for mothers' attitudes.

Three questions in the parents' survey were used to estimate maternal attitudes. These were identical to those in the students' questionnaire. Student responses were used as dependent variables to test Hypothesis 2B in this research. The precise wording of these questions may be found on page 60. To review, however, each asked the respondent's opinion as to an issue concerning working women. Responses were rated on a Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Recalling the discussion of these variables earlier in this chapter, one question asked whether a working mother of preschool children could be as good a mother as one who does not work. Another asked if it was usually better for the man to be the achiever outside the home and the woman to stay inside the home. The third question asked respondents if they thought women were usually happier when they stayed at home.

Description of the Data

The nature of the relationships between maternal employment and various outcomes for children was explored through the use of multiple regression. This was accomplished through use of a data set which made it possible to observe the effects of factors identified by previous research and theory.

The Data Set

The data used in this analysis were compiled by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) for the National Center for Educational Statistics. The set, High School and Beyond (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1980) consists of five files, two of which were used in this study. These data were derived from a national sample of high school seniors and sophomores and their parents, and were collected in the spring of 1980. The set is the first wave of a national longitudinal survey of youth.

One of the two files used in this research was the Student File. A two-stage probability sample was used to select respondents. A sampling frame of 26,095 schools led to a subject sample of 1,122 schools; 36 sophomores and 36 seniors were randomly selected from each school for participation in the survey. The total sample from which

the subsample used in this study was drawn comprised 28,240 seniors and 30,030 sophomores.

The second file used in this analysis was the Parent File. This survey was done in autumn 1980 and used a subsample of parents of respondents in the student survey. The sampling techniques followed those used in the student survey. A subsample of 312 schools was drawn from the 1,015 participating schools. From these 312 schools, parents of 3,654 sophomores and 3,547 seniors participated in the survey. Data were collected via mailed questionnaires and telephone and personal interviews.

The senior questionnaire consisted of 121 questions and the sophomore questionnaire contained 114 questions; 89 questions are common to the two groups. The parent-of-senior survey comprised 72 questions, and the parent-of-sophomore survey comprised 68 questions; 58 questions were common to the two groups, and a number of questions were common to both student and parent questionnaires.

The Student-Parent File

This analysis was based solely on those families who participated in the student and the parent surveys. This made it necessary to use the parent file to draw the subsample from the student file. Each participant was

assigned a unique case identifier. This number for the students corresponded with the assigned number for parents. The parent and student data were matched and those students whose parents were also respondents were drawn from the student file.

Student data were combined with parent data to create a new file which consisted of parent and student responses to selected questions. In the newly created file, therefore, a case consisted of both sets of responses. This was done so that responses of parents and their children could be combined. The next section describes the sociodemographics of subjects in the newly created file and the cases drawn from it for use in the present analysis.

Sociodemographics of the Subsample

The subsample used in this analysis comprised 4,544 cases. There were 2,239 sophomore respondents and 2,305 senior respondents. Among the group, 2,265 (49.9%) were females and 2,121 (46.7%) were males. The remaining 158 (3.4%) of the cases were coded as missing on this variable. Within the sample, there were 357 black and 3,760 white respondents. These represented 7.9% and 82.75% of the total, respectively. The remaining 9.35% of the

sample comprised various other ethnic groups. This analysis was restricted to whites for two reasons. In many cases, sociological models appear to be race specific, appropriate for whites but not for blacks or vice versa. Thus, limiting the analysis to whites eliminated some interpretive problems. Second, the sub-sample drawn from the data set contains data on 3,760 whites and 357 blacks. By using whites rather than any other group, the sample used in the present study was as large as possible. Using a large sample permitted the analysis of subgroups.

There is widespread evidence in the literature that any impact of maternal employment is mediated by the particular family situation (Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1982; Hayes & Kammerman, 1983). More specifically, there is an indication that these outcomes may depend on whether or not the children have grown up in an intact nuclear family or in some other circumstance, such as a single-parent home. While the nature of each of these is certainly provocative, time and space require analyses to be limited in some ways. This research was limited to intact nuclear families. This was accomplished by omitting all those in the sample who responded that

they lived with someone other than both their mother and father.

There were two reasons for this limitation. The first involved the research design. Any attempt at explanation involves the rather complicated task of decomposing a multifaceted relationship. This can be accomplished more easily if the population of concern is homogeneous on some factors. Understanding the dynamics of the situation for any portion of society would certainly be worthwhile, but important differences--such as family composition--may influence how maternal employment affects the family. For example, some studies suggest that the trauma of divorce may lead to rebellious behavior in children. By omitting families who had experienced divorce, the possibility of divorce as a causal component was eliminated.

The selection of the families to be used in this study was made on the basis of student responses to the following question:

Which of the following people live in the same household with you? A = father, C = mother. Respondents who answered no to either of those questions were eliminated. Since stepparents were alternative

responses, it was assumed that these responses referred to natural parents.

Method of Analysis

The statistical method used in this analysis was multiple regression. This procedure takes into account the contributions of a number of variables to the statistical explanation of the dependent variable. This procedure made it possible to estimate in some detail the nature and strength of various influences (independent variables) to a particular outcome (dependent variable).

One assumption of multiple regression is that the values of the dependent variable are normally distributed with constant standard deviations at all levels of the independent variables. Multiple regression is also based on the assumption that the relationship between the dependent and independent variables is linear in form. Put another way, for each unit increase in the independent variables, there will be a consistent increase in the mean value of the dependent variable. By examining the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable at a number of levels, the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable may be more confidently estimated.

In assuming normality, regression also assumes that dependent variables are continuous rather than discrete. As such, scores on a dependent variable could fall anywhere within extremes of a continuum. This condition allows one to more fully examine the influence of the predictors. When the dependent variable is discrete, scores cannot fall anywhere along a continuum but rather only at specific points along the continuum. In many variables, these points can only represent approximations within the response range. Furthermore, the fewer response choices given for this variable, the cruder the predictions of the influence of the independent variables will be. To illustrate, one hypothesis predicted a relationship between maternal employment patterns and children's attitudes. This was tested using dependent variables which asked students their opinion on certain aspects of maternal employment in general. Students were asked to respond "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree" to each of three questions. In reality, opinions may be continuous variables, taking an infinite number of

values between absolute agreement and absolute disagreement. When respondents must select a response category which only approximates their opinion, there is a degree of error in that response. The farther away from accuracy one is forced to choose, the greater the error. One consequence of this is that the influence of independent variables can only be roughly estimated and should be interpreted with caution. One strategy for dealing with this dilemma is to make use of sophisticated techniques such as logistic regression. This technique statistically transforms categorical variables into unbounded continuous dependent variables (Hanushek & Jackson, 1977).

Another dependent variable in this study was an index of nonconformity to school policies. The index was created by adding student responses of "true" or "false" on three questions. The greater the number of items to which a student responded "true," the higher the index score. The additive index provides an ordinal measure of nonconformity. Due to the dichotomy of each item in the index, the assumption of the continuous nature of the dependent variables, discussed above, would not permit use of the items individually. By adding scores

of three items together, the dependent variable, the index, has a range of 0-3.

There are actually three independent variables in the present study: maternal employment during children's preschool years, maternal employment during children's elementary school years, and maternal employment during children's high school years. Each variable has three categories: no employment, part time employment, and full time employment. These variables were converted into dummy variables to be used in regression equations (Agresti & Agresti, 1979). This was accomplished by creating a series of new variables, each representing a category of the maternal work variable. Each case was assigned a value of one for observations which fall into a particular category, and a value of zero for the other newly created variables. In the case of maternal work during high school, for example, a student whose mother did not work would be assigned a value of one for the "no work" variable and a value of zero for the "part time" and "full time" variables. It was necessary to create new variables for all categories of the variable of interest minus one, since the final category

represents all those cases coded zero on all other levels of the variable.

The value for the omitted category is the value of the intercept in the regression equation. The coefficients of the dummy variables are interpreted as the difference in the mean of that particular category of the variable and the mean of the omitted category (Blalock, 1972; Kerlinger & Pedhazur, 1973). These coefficients provide a measure of influence that a category of the variable has compared to the influence of the omitted category on the dependent variable. Using the employment during high school example, the coefficient for the "no work" variable is actually the difference in the mean of the dependent variable when the independent variable is "no work" compared to the mean of the dependent variable when the independent work variable is "full time." One hypothesis predicts that careerism, a component of children's sex role orientations, will be stronger when their mothers work. Careerism is operationalized by the ages at which children expect to marry and bear their first child. According to the hypothesis, the coefficient for the "no work" category should be negative, as daughters whose mothers do not work should expect to

marry and have children at a younger age than those whose mothers work full time. The mean age at marriage for children whose mothers do not work should be lower than the mean age at marriage for children whose mothers work full time. The magnitude of the "no work" coefficient indicates the strength of this category relative to the "full time work" category. Similarly the coefficient for the part time variable is the difference of means between part time and full time work on the dependent variable. The significance of these were tested using t-tests.

In this study, the "full time work" category was the omitted group for each of the work variables. Since the concern of this research was the effect of maternal employment, comparisons of the effect of full time work to other employment patterns were of the greatest interest. Suppressing the category "full time work" provided estimates of change in the dependent variables resulting from a decrease in the extent of maternal employment. Alternative strategies for analyzing nominal data include using F-tests for equality of means at each level of the independent variable or treating the work variables as ordinal, enabling estimates of the effect of change throughout the range of the work variables.

One hypothesis predicted that the influence of mothers' attitudes on those of their children would be mediated by maternal employment. Recall from the discussion of hypotheses in Chapter IV that this was tested using three variables identical in the parent and student questionnaires. To examine this, it was necessary to assess the extent to which mothers' influence differed according to the extent of their employment after taking into account the influence of their attitude alone and the influence of their employment patterns alone. Interaction terms measure the change in the relationship between one independent variable and the dependent variable controlling for another independent variable. This is done by computing the cross-product of the two independent variables (Agresti & Agresti, 1979). Significant interaction terms would provide additional support for the hypothesis; that is, the combined effect of maternal employment and maternal attitudes should have a significant effect on children's attitudes beyond their separate influences.

Logic of the Analysis

This study attempted to explain the extent to which maternal employment contributes to the explanation of particular attitudes and behaviors of high school students.

Given the complexity of human behavior, it is unlikely that a single element fully accounts for any single outcome. Therefore, estimating the contribution of a single variable to a particular outcome necessitates taking into account the ways in which a number of factors affect the dependent variable.

Each of the models in this study was initially examined with the work variables entered into the equation first. This made it possible to estimate the relationship between the dependent variables and maternal employment alone, and also to examine the relationships in the full models. A bivariate relationship that does not change as control variables are introduced is an indication that the control variables are not influential in the model. The Statistical Analysis System (SAS, 1979) provides the sums of squares in additive form and also as the unique contribution of each variable in the equation. By comparing these sums of squares it was possible to compare the influence of a variable dependent on its order of entry and also on its unique contribution. A variable may contribute substantially to a model when added first, but if its strength diminishes when other variables are considered, this would suggest that there is little

practical contribution of this variable to the model. On the other hand, if the contribution of a variable to the model does not change according to its placement in the equation, the coefficient for that variable represents its independent contribution to an explanation of change in the dependent variable net of the effects of the other variables in the model.

CHAPTER V
FINDINGS

To recapitulate, this research explored possible impacts of maternal employment on children within the frame of two hypotheses. The first predicted that, as mothers spend a larger share of their time engaged in gainful employment, their attitudes would be less congruent with those expressed by their children. Second, some effects of maternal employment may be contingent upon the sex of the child. The present study explored two of these effects. Maternal employment affects the amount of socially unacceptable behavior exhibited by children, especially sons. Also, children of working mothers should express more careerist orientations than children of nonworking mothers. This should be particularly important for daughters. The sample on which the analysis was based is first described; then the results of the tests for each of the hypotheses are presented.

Sample Characteristics

The first tables in this chapter summarize characteristics of the sample used in the analysis. Table 5-1 presents the means and standard deviations for all variables other than the three maternal employment variables. Tables 5-2, 5-3, and 5-4 describe in detail the work patterns of the mothers in the sample. Table 5-5 presents zero order correlations for all of the variables.

The subsample used in this study consists of 48.6% females and 51.4% males. Students were asked to report their average grades in percentages. The mean score on this variable was 81.2, interpreted as 81.2%.

The social class scores were standardized within each grade level. This was done by the U.S. Dept. of Education (1980) in High School and Beyond. The average score of .966 with a range of -20 to 20 reflects this standardization process. The standard deviation of this variable was 7.076. A major shortcoming of previous research in this area has been the limited operationalization of the social class variable. The data set enabled this study to examine families from every social class group in a single analysis.

Table 5-1. Means and Standard Deviations (SD) of Variables.

Variables	N	Mean	SD
Independent Variables			
STUDENTS:			
Sex (females=0, males=1)	3611	.486	.500
Grades in school (in %)	3673	80.62	8.95
Social class (-20 to 20)	3673	.966	7.076
Siblings in house (false=0, true=1)	3700	.850	.361
Talk to friends on telephone			
Rarely talks on phone	3682	.187	.221
Talks less than once week	3682	.261	.234
Talks once/twice week	3682	.513	.288
PARENTS:			
*Working mother as good as non-working (1=st agree, 4=st disagree)	1789	2.422	.840
*Men work women stay home (1=st agree, 4=st disagree)	1801	2.521	.834
*Women usually happier at home 1=st agree, 4=st disagree)	1794	2.468	.767
Dependent Variables			
**Working mothers as good as non-working (1=st agree, 4=st disagree)	1789	2.387	.848
**Men work and women stay home (1=st agree, 4=st disagree)	1801	2.473	.830
**Women usually happier at home (1=st agree, 4=st disagree)	1794	2.523	.745
Behavior Index: Males	1720	.682	.852
Females	1832	.493	.729
Age expect marry: Males	1555	23.35	2.644
Females	1747	22.44	2.611
Age 1st child: Males	1471	25.06	2.754
Females	1633	24.51	2.660

*Asked of parents of sophomores only.
**Asked of sophomore respondents only.

Table 5-2. Cross-Classification of Employment Patterns for Mothers Who Did Not Work Before Their Children Were in Elementary School.

	During High School			
	No work	Part time	Full time	Row N Row %
During Elementary School	N %	N %	N %	
No work	813 35.53	434 18.97	213 9.31	1460 63.81
Part time	63 2.75	272 11.89	242 10.85	577 25.22
Full time	25 1.09	20 0.87	206 9.00	251 10.79
N %	901 39.37	726 31.73	661 29.16	2288

Table 5-3. Cross-Classification of Employment Patterns for Mothers Who Worked Part-Time Before Their Children Were in Elementary School.

	During High School			
	No work	Part time	Full time	Row N Row %
During Elementary School	N %	N %	N %	
No work	37 8.37	13 2.94	6 1.36	56 12.67
Part time	35 7.92	152 34.39	89 20.14	276 62.44
Full time	8 1.81	5 1.13	97 21.95	110 24.89
N %	80 18.10	170 38.46	192 43.45	442

Table 5-4. Cross-Classification of Employment Patterns for Mothers Who Worked Full Time Before Their Children Were in Elementary School.

	During High School			
	No work	Part time	Full time	Row N Row %
During Elementary School	N %	N %	N %	
No work	47 7.78	17 2.81	10 1.66	74 12.25
Part time	23 3.81	36 5.96	19 3.15	78 12.91
Full time	40 6.62	40 6.62	372 61.59	452 74.83
N %	110 18.21	93 15.39	401 66.40	604

Table 5-5. Zero Order Correlation Coefficients.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7[a]
Work preschool	1.000	.561*	.280*	.004	-.076*	-.038*	-.038*
Work elementary school		1.000	.575*	-.004	-.091*	-.046*	-.082*
Work high school			1.000	.020	-.015	-.030	-.032
Sex of student				1.000	.030	-.192*	-.035*
Class						.134*	.022
Grades						1.000	.022
Siblings							1.000

[a]1 = work preschool; 2 = work elementary school; 3 = work high school; 4 = sex of student; 5 = class; 6 = grades attained; 7 = siblings at home.

	Peers	Parent Work mother	Parent Man work	Parent Woman home	Student Work mother	Student Man work
Work preschool	.008	-.250*	.102*	.086*	-.137*	.050*
Work elementary school	.013	-.298*	.186*	.150*	-.161*	.119*
Work high school	.001	-.234*	.199*	.171*	-.102*	.162*
Sex	-.276*	.056*	-.042*	-.025	.069*	-.259*
Class	.129*	.012	.123*	.181*	.006	.116*
Grades	.006	.027	-.015	.0004*	.032	.101*
Siblings	-.002	.048*	.033	.046*	-.003	.030
Peers	1.000	-.042*	.049*	.032*	.042	-.063*
Parent: work mother		1.000	-.398*	-.324*	.170*	-.124*
Parent: work man			1.000	.570*	-.138*	.172*
Parent: woman in home					-.108*	.218*
Student: work mother					1.000	-.222*
Student: man work						1.000

* Significant at .05 level.

Table 5-5 continued

	Student woman home	Behavior Index	Age marry	Age first child
Work preschool	.020	.009	-.007	.019
Work elementary school	.047	.016	-.022	.002
Work high school	.074*	.025	-.032	-.017
Sex	-.197*	.640*	.085*	.090*
Class	.172*	.033*	.040*	.023
Grades	.183*	-.302*	-.064*	-.078*
Siblings	-.002	-.042*	-.008	-.008
Peers	.078*	-.011	-.045*	-.016
Parent: work mother	-.068*	-.039*	-.023	-.030
Parent: man work	.094*	.020	.047*	.034
Parent: woman in home	.166*	.023	.056*	.057*
Student: work mother	-.133*	.064*	-.005	-.018
Student: man work	.484*	-.073*	.003	.015
Student: woman in home	1.000	-.079*	-.000	.008
Behavior		1.000	.060	.023
Cut classes			.018	.042*
Age marry			1.000	.752*
Age first child				1.000

* Significant at .05 level.

Regarding family composition, 85% of the students had siblings living at home with them at the time of the study. This means that only 15% of the sample may be the youngest and only children, the only categories that would have no siblings in the home.

Evidence has suggested that white children from intact families may perform better in school than children from other backgrounds (Crowley, 1976). Some research has shown that ordinal position may affect grades, in that earlier birth order seems conducive to higher academic achievement (Hayes & Kammerman, 1983). It is important to keep in mind the particular characteristics of the group of students used for the present study and the potential influence of those characteristics on the results of this analysis.

Three identical questions concerning maternal employment were asked of sophomores and their parents. As is evidenced in Table 5-1 (p. 87), students and parents had similar mean scores on all questions. The standard deviations were also similar for these particular variables. This suggests that student responses were about the same as parent responses on these issues, although this does not necessarily indicate that

students and their own parents expressed the same attitudes.

Three questions regarding school-related behaviors were combined to form a behavior index. A score of zero ("false") on all three items meant that students did not have serious trouble with the law, were not suspended from school, and were not truant during the school year. A maximum score of three meant that students responded "true" to all three questions. The mean score for males on this index was .682 and the standard deviation was .856; for females, the mean score was .493 and the standard deviation was .729. Females scored somewhat lower on the index, indicating that on average they commit these behaviors less often than males.

Another set of questions asked students to estimate in years at what age they would marry and have their first child. The predicted age at marriage for daughters was 22.44 years and the standard deviation was 2.611, versus 23.35 and 2.644, respectively, for sons. The mean score regarding daughters' age at the birth of their first child was 24.51 with a standard deviation of 2.660. The daughters in this sample planned to time the birth of their first child when they

were close to 25 years old. The average predictions made by this sample of teenagers regarding both age at marriage and at the birth of their first child are somewhat higher than the current national figures (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1982), although not as dissimilar to government projections (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1983) for ages of marriage and birth of first child in the next decade. Sons on average expected to be 25.06 years old at the birth of their first child. The standard deviation of male scores on this variable was 2.754. The age differences between males and females are also similar to government projections (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1983).

Maternal Employment Patterns

Tables 5-2, 5-3, and 5-4 (pp. 88-90) display employment patterns of mothers in this study. Table 5-2 shows employment patterns during children's elementary school years and high school years for the 2,288 mothers (68.63% of the total sample of mothers) who were not employed before their children entered elementary school. Table 5-3 displays the employment patterns during children's elementary school and high school year for the 442 mothers (13.27% of the total sample) who were employed part time before their children entered

elementary school. Table 5-4 (p. 90) shows employment patterns during children's elementary school and high school year for 604 mothers (18.12% of the total sample) who were full time employees during the period before their children entered elementary school. Because percentages were rounded to the nearest hundredth, column and row totals may not always sum to 100.

Table 5-2 (p. 88) reports that, of the mothers who did not work before their children were in elementary school, 35.53% remained out of the work force during the years when their children were in elementary and high school. This group of mothers is of particular importance to this study in that they represent one extreme in a labor force participation continuum, those who were not employed during their children's lives. This group of 813 mothers comprised 24.39% of the total sample of 3,334 participants.

Table 5-2 also indicates that 9% of the mothers who were not employed during their children's preschool years joined the work force full time when their children were in elementary school and continued to work full time when their children were in high school. Another 9.31% of the total sample of mothers remained out of the labor

force while their children were in elementary school and went back to work full time when their children were in high school.

Table 5-3 (p. 89) displays the work patterns of mothers who were employed on a part-time basis before their children were in elementary school. This group represents 13.26% of the total sample. Nearly 22% of these women joined the labor force full time when their children entered elementary school and remained employed when their children were in high school. Of those mothers who worked part-time during their children's preschool years, 34.39% retained their status as part time workers during their children's high school years. An additional 20.14% of mothers who were part time workers during their children's preschool and elementary school years joined the labor force on a full time basis when their children were in high school.

Table 5-4 (p. 90) describes the work patterns for children whose mothers were full time workers before their children were in elementary school. This group represents 18.12% of the total sample. Of this group, 7.78% of the mothers dropped out of the labor force when their children entered elementary school and did not

return to work. Additionally, 6.62% of this group worked throughout the years when their children were in elementary school but not during the high school years of their children.

Mothers which are of particular interest in this table are those who worked full time before their children were in elementary school and continued this employment pattern throughout their children's school years. These mothers number 372 (11.16%) of the total sample in this group. Referring back to Table 5-2 (p. 88), another 813 mothers (24.39%) of the total sample were not gainfully employed at any time.

Looking at the maternal work patterns as a continuum, 11.18% of the mothers were continually employed full time throughout their children's lives. At the other end of the continuum, 24.39% of the mothers were not employed at any time. The remaining 64.37% of mothers in this study reported various work patterns between the extremes of consistent full time participation in the labor force and no participation in the labor force at any time.

Table 5-5 (p. 91) presents the zero order correlation matrix for all variables used in the study. The

computer program SAS follows a protocol of pairwise deletion. If a case has a missing value on a variable for either member of a pair, that case is dropped from the calculation of that particular correlation. For this reason, the number of cases used for computations may vary slightly. It should also be remembered that one group of variables, those which asked parents and their children about their attitudes on maternal employment, were asked only of sophomores. For these variables, the number of cases used in the analysis will be only about one-half of that used in other calculations. In the correlation procedure, this will affect significance levels of particular variable combinations.

Since association is a necessary condition for causality (Asher, 1976), it is useful to examine the zero order correlations between the variables as they were used to test the hypotheses in this study. The correlations between the students' attitudes toward maternal employment and maternal work patterns were significant at the .05 level throughout the categories of all three work periods: before entering school, during elementary school years, and during high school for two of the attitude variables ("Working mothers

can be as good as nonworking mothers" and "Men should achieve outside the home and women should achieve inside the home"). The third variable ("Women are usually happier at home") was significantly correlated with the maternal employment pattern only during the time when the children were in high school.

Each of these correlations indicates that, as the extent of maternal employment increases, the responses of children on these attitude questions change as well. In the first of these variables, unfavorable opinions toward a particular aspect of maternal employment (the ability of a working mother to be as good as a nonworking mother) are represented by "agree" and "strongly agree" (coded 1 and 2). In the other two attitude variables regarding men achieving outside the home and whether or not women are happier inside the home, responses that are unfavorable toward maternal employment are represented by "disagree" and "strongly disagree." The fact that the correlations between maternal work patterns and the first variable (regarding maternal employment attitudes) are inverse and that the relationships between maternal work patterns and the other variables are positive, indicates support for the first

hypothesis in this study. There are no significant correlations between maternal employment patterns and the other dependent variables used in this analysis.

The theory presented in Chapter II also suggested that males and females may be differentially affected by maternal employment. The correlations presented in Table 5-5 (pp. 91-92) indicate that sex is associated with each of the dependent variables. The positive signs of these coefficients indicate that the mean score on the dependent variable is significantly higher for males than for females. The importance of these associations will be discussed as the findings for each hypothesis are presented.

Findings: Attitudes Toward Maternal Employment

Table 5-6 summarizes the effects of maternal employment on children's attitudes. This was measured using standard multiple regression testing the following model:

$$E(Y) = a + b_{11}x + b_{22}x + b_{33}x + b_{44}x + b_{55}x + b_{66}x + b_{77}x + b_{88}x + b_{99}x + b_{10\,10}x + b_{11\,11}x$$

where:

Y = Student's response to attitude question

x_1 = Parent's response on same question

Table 5-6. Regression of Maternal Employment, Maternal Attitude, and Background Characteristics on Children's Attitudes--Partial Regression Coefficients and Standard Errors.

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables[a] 1	2	3
Intercept	1.568	2.245	1.753
	(.211)	(.222)	(.199)
Parental response on same question (1=st agree, 4=st disagree)	.096*	.143*	.111*
	(.023)	(.029)	(.024)
Work before school:			
None	.161*	.006	-.014
s.e.	(.066)	(.067)	(.057)
Part time	.084	.045	.023
s.e.	(.082)	(.027)	(.071)
Work elementary			
None	.168*	-.059	-.018
s.e.	(.074)	(.57)	(.064)
Part time	.037	-.027	.077
s.e.	(.069)	(.070)	(.060)
Work high school			
None	-.066	-.201*	.-053
s.e.	(.061)	(.061)	(.054)
Part time	.013	-.147*	-.094
s.e.	(.058)	(.058)	(.051)
Sex (0=female, 1=male)	.132*	-.448*	-.276*
s.e.	(.046)	(.046)	(.041)
Grades	.004	.002	.009*
s.e.	(.002)	(.002)	(.002)
Social class	-.004	.010*	.014*
s.e.	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)

Table 5-6 continued

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables[a]		
Siblings at home (0=no, 1=yes)	-.016	.018	-.076
s.e.	(.063)	(.062)	(.056)
Rarely talk to friends on phone	-.065	.148*	.047
s.e.	(.073)	(.074)	(.065)
Talk on phone at least once a week	.122	-.014	-.054
s.e.	(.054)	(.071)	(.064)
Talk on phone once/twice a week	-.002	.012	.036
s.e.	(.085)	(.054)	(.048)
N =	1535	1392	1474
R^2 =	.052	.123	.103

[a]1 = Working mothers as good as nonworking mothers
2 = Men work, women stay home
3 = Women happier at home

* = Significant at the .05 level.

x_2 = Maternal employment before elementary school

x_3 = Maternal employment during elementary school

x_4 = Maternal employment during high school

x_5 = Sex of the student

x_6 = Social class score of the family

x_7 = Grades of the student

x_8 = Siblings at home

x_9 = Rarely talks to friends on the telephone

x_{10} = Talks to friends on the telephone less than once a week

x_{11} = Talks to friends on the telephone once or twice a week

In the first equation, the dependent variable is the students' attitudes regarding the ability of working mothers to be as good as mothers who do not work. In this variable, a traditional response is represented by response categories 3 = "disagree" and 4 = "strongly disagree." The model tested was able to explain 5.2% of the total variance in the dependent variable. When entered into the equation first, the three work variables explained 1.7% of the total variance. The covariates accounted for the remaining 3.5% of the total variance.

When entered into the equation after the covariates, the maternal work variables explain 1.6% of the total variance, slightly less than they explain when entered first. Recalling the discussion in Chapter IV on the order of entry of variables into an equation, this indicates that the extent of the impact of maternal employment on the dependent variable is not influenced by other variables in the equation. Recall, also, that Chapter IV provided a rationale for entering the maternal employment variables first into the equations in this study. The order of entry of the maternal employment variables is consistent with the order followed in the equation currently under discussion unless stated otherwise.

Maternal employment before the children were in school by itself accounted for 1.2% of the total variance when entered first into the equation. The only employment category of this variable which was statistically significant was that in which mothers did not work during their children's preschool years when compared to the omitted category, those children whose mothers were employed full time during this period. The extent of work during the children's elementary school years

accounted for an additional .46% of the total variance when added after the employment during preschool but before the employment during high school variable. The maternal employment pattern during the children's high school years was able to contribute an additional .04% to the total variance when added after the employment during elementary school but before the covariates.

Of the covariates in this equation, one which was significant was the parental response on the same question. This variable, entered immediately preceding the maternal employment variables, explained 1.6% of the total variance. The positive sign of this coefficient indicates that a numerical increase in the response code yields a slight increase in the intercept value. Although the intercept value alone has no practical significance, multiple regression provides an indication of the direction of the influence variables have in a model. Recalling that for this equation th e responses "disagree" (coded 3) and "strongly disagree" (coded 4) represent traditional responses, one can see that an increase in parent traditional response led to an increase in student traditional response. The only other variable which was significant in this equation was sex

of the student respondent. As in the covariate just discussed, the positive direction of this coefficient suggests that females were more likely to express more traditional responses than males.

As discussed in Chapter IV, variable coefficients are interpreted as the amount of change in the dependent variable caused by a one unit change in that variable. Thus, the mean of the dependent variable is predicted to be .161 units higher for students with mothers who were not employed during the years before their children were in school rather than for those whose mothers were employed full time, controlling for the other variables in the model. Recalling that there are four response categories or units in the dependent variable, the difference in the attitudes expressed by those students whose mothers worked full time during their preschool years compared to those of students whose mothers did not work during this period is minimal. Thus, while this variable may be statistically significant (due to the large number of respondents), it has little practical significance in explaining variance in the dependent variable.

The second dependent variable was the question which asked the respondents if it was better for men

to work outside the house and for women to stay at home. Thus, agreement represents a traditional response. This model was able to explain a total of 12.38% of the variance in the dependent variable. When introduced first in the equation, the work variables together could explain only 1.5% of the total variance.

None of the variables representing maternal employment patterns during their children's preschool years and elementary school years were significant. Maternal work patterns during the years when the students were in high school explained .7% of the variance when added after the other work variables describing maternal work patterns during children's preschool and elementary school years. Observing the coefficients in this equation, one can see that only work patterns during the high school years were significant. The coefficient for part time work during high school, which is actually a comparison of those students whose mothers worked part time with those whose mothers worked full time, added -.147 to the intercept. This actually decreased the intercept score, suggesting a move toward disagreement or a nontraditional response. The coefficient for no work during this period, which is a comparison of

those students whose mothers did not work during this period with those students whose mothers worked full time, increases the intercept by .201 units.

Regarding the covariates, the sex of the respondent, entered immediately following the parental attitude variable and the maternal employment variables, was the main influence in this model, contributing 4.6% of the total variance. The negative sign of the coefficient indicates that being male decreases the intercept score. Recalling that traditional responses are represented by scores of 1 and 2, the direction of this coefficient indicates more traditional responses among males.

Parental response on the same question also had a significant influence in the model. The coefficient for this variable was .143. The fact that the coefficient was positive suggests that, as parents' responses are more traditional, so are their children's.

Furthermore, in this equation one category of the peer affiliation variable was significant. Peer affiliation was measured on the basis of how frequently students talked to their friends on the telephone. In this equation, the difference between the extreme categories (rarely talking on the telephone and talking daily on the

telephone) was significant. The coefficient added .148 to the intercept, suggesting that low peer affiliation tends toward increasingly traditional responses. The fact that the maternal work variables together could only explain 1.5% of the total variance in the dependent variable suggests that maternal employment has little to do with the relationship between mothers' and children's attitudes as estimated by this variable.

These findings offer little support for the hypothesis that maternal employment affects the amount of influence mothers have on the attitudes expressed by their children.

In the third equation, traditionalism is represented by response categories 1 and 2. This variable asks the respondent's opinion as to whether or not women are usually happier in the home rather than at work. The maternal employment variables were able to explain .06% of the variance in this equation. None of these variables was significant.

Sex had a significant effect in this equation, when entered after the maternal employment variables, and explained 6.4% of the variance. Males were more traditional in their responses than females. Parental

attitude also had a significant although minor effect. Nontraditional responses of parents slightly increased the nontraditional responses of students. Social class and academic achievement were also significant. Higher scores on each of these indicate more nontraditional responses.

Table 5-7 shows that the responses of parents on attitude questions identical to those asked of their children were significant in all three models. The possibility that there is a unique effect produced by the combination of the maternal attitude variables with the maternal work variables was investigated. To do so, the interaction terms of the parental attitude variables and the maternal work variables were entered last into the model.

Interaction Terms

Contribution and significance of the interaction terms were estimated using the F statistic. These tests examined the effects of the interaction of maternal employment and various parental attitudes on the attitudes of the students. Significant interaction terms would indicate that maternal employment patterns and parental attitudes together have an impact on student attitudes beyond their separate influence. The interaction terms

Table 5-7. F Values for Interaction Terms of Maternal Work Categories and Parental Attitudes on the Attitudes of Their Children.

Dependent Variables	Children's Attitudes
	Working mother as good as nonworking mother
Interaction of Parental Attitude[a] 1 and	F (P)
Work before school	.42 (.656)
Work during elementary school	1.28 (.278)
Work during high school	1.01 (.365)
	Men should work, women should stay home
Interaction of Parental Attitude[a] 2 and	
Work before school	1.09 (.336)
Work during elementary school	1.37 (.256)
Work during high school	.27 (.761)
Interaction of Parental Attitude[a] 3 and	Women are happier at home
Work before school	.49 (.613)
Work during elementary school	2.10 (.123)
Work during high school	1.49 (.227

[a]1 = Working mother as good as nonworking mother
2 = Men work, women stay home
3 = Women happier at home

were not significant for any of the equations. For this reason, only results of the main effects models are reported.

The model depicted in Figure 1 (p. 51) was also run separately for males and females. Each of the equations used to test this model was also run, including the sex of the parental respondent. The results of these did not provide any stronger information than the full equations presented here.

Extreme Cases

These equations compared outcomes for students at the extreme ends of the employment continuum. Students whose mothers were employed full time throughout their lives were compared to students whose mothers had not been gainfully employed during any period of their children's lives. The hypothesis which these equations tested predicted that an increase in maternal employment would lead to a decrease in the agreement of attitudes between parents and their children. One way to test this hypothesis is through the examination of extreme cases. That is, to compare the degree of congruence in those families where mothers have been employed full time throughout their children's lives to the congruence in

those families in which the mother has never been employed. Tables 5-8 and 5-9 present the results of this comparison.

In table 5-8, the extreme maternal work patterns are represented by the variable Worka. This includes those student respondents whose mothers worked full time throughout all three periods in their children's lives (coded 0) and those whose mothers did not work in any period of their children's lives (coded 1). The variable labeled Relat indicates the sex of the parent respondent. Fathers were coded 3 and mothers coded 1.

By comparing the means and standard deviations presented in Table 5-8 to those of the entire sample presented in Table 5-1 (p. 87), it can be seen that the subsample of extreme cases is much like the larger sample as described by these statistics. Comparing the zero order correlations in Table 5-8 to those in Table 5-5 (pp. 91-92), one can see that in both tables the attitudes toward maternal employment expressed by both parents and children are significantly correlated to the work patterns of mothers. In both tables, the sex of the student respondent is significantly correlated with most of the other variables.

Table 5-8. Extreme Cases of Maternal Employment--Full Time Throughout Children's Lives and No Work in Any Period of Children's Lives--and Background Characteristics on Children's Attitudes; Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations.

Variables	Worka	Relat	Comses	Sex	Grades	HHBS	Phone	Pworkm	Pmanach	Pwohome	Workmo	Manach	Womhom
Relat	.157*												
Comses	.148*	-.011											
Sex	.004	.001	.029										
Grades	.056*	.004	.134*	-.192*									
HHBS	.115*	-.018	.022	-.035*	.022								
Phone	-.006	-.014	.101*	-.237*	-.002	-.005							
Pworm	.355*	-.044	.012	.056*	.027	.047*	-.053*						
Pmanach	-.151*	-.062	.123*	-.042*	-.016	.033	.044	-.398*					
Wohome	-.125*	-.049*	.180*	-.025*	.01	.044	.037	-.324	.570*				
Workmo	.197*	-.022	.005	.069*	.032	.003	-.042	.170*	-.138	-.108*			
Manach	-.095*	-.011	.116*	-.259*	.100*	.030	.042	-.124*	.172*	.218*	-.222*		
Womhom	-.033	.042	.172*	-.197*	.183*	-.022	-.033	-.068*	.094*	.166*	-.113*	.484	
Means	.763	2.173	.971	.494	80.119	.812	3.006	2.580	2.008	2.499	.280	2.562	2.699
Standard Deviation	.425	4.512	7.083	.500	9.016	.359	1.159	1.033	.770	.856	.881	.798	.714

* Significant at .05 level.

Table 5-9. Regression of Extreme Cases of Maternal Employment and Background Characteristics on Children's Attitudes--Partial Regression Coefficients and Standard Errors.

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables[a] 1	2	3
Intercept	1.688	2.329	1.772
	(.286)	(.302)	(.279)
Worka (0=full time, 1=not work) s.e.	.288*	-.176*	-.070
	(.070)	(.070)	(.060)
Sex of parent resp.	.027	-.007	.001
s.e.	(.028)	(.029)	(.026)
Comses	.002	.011*	.016*
s.e.	(.004)	(.004)	(.004)
Sex	.154*	-.499*	-.332*
s.e.	(.061)	(.062)	(.057)
Grades	.001	.002	.009*
s.e.	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)
Siblings in house	.080	-.044	-.116
s.e.	(.081)	(.081)	(.075)
Rarely talk on phone	.077	-.067	.007
s.e.	(.073)	(.074)	(.067)
Talk once/week	.059	-.017	.018
s.e.	(.095)	(.094)	(.083)
Talk 1-2 times/week	-.083	.192	.124
s.e.	(.031)	(.097)	(.087)
Parent attitude	.084*	.120*	.096*
s.e.	(.031)	(.038)	(.034)
N =	872	807	834
R^2 =	.061	.124	.106

[a]1 = Working mothers as good as nonworking mothers
2 = Men work, women stay home
3 = Women happier at home

* Significant at the .05 level.

In the first equation, 6.1% of the total variance was explained by the model. The extreme case work variable (Worka) was significant in this equation. The coefficient for this variable was .288. Recall that the extreme cases were coded so that full time employment throughout children's lives were given a value of zero and no work during any period in children's lives was given a value of one. The dependent variable asked if a working mother could be as good as a nonworking mother. For this question, responses of "disagree" (coded 3) and "strongly disagree" (coded 4) represent traditional responses. The maternal employment coefficient supports the prediction that children whose mothers work full time are more traditional in their responses than those whose mothers have never been employed.

Two covariates were significant in this equation. Being male increased the intercept, suggesting that males may be more traditional than females. Also, as parental scores increased, so did the scores of their children. The pattern of these two variables is similar to their effect in the model reported in Table 5-6 (pp. 102-103).

The second equation explained 12.4% of the total variance in the dependent variable. The work variable entered into the equation first explained, by itself, .517% of the variance. Although the work variable was statistically significant, the fact that the variable was able to explain such a small portion of the variance suggests an absence of any practical significance.

Sex and social class were significant in the equation, as was the attitude of the parent. The influence of these three variables is consistent with the findings in the other equations displayed in Table 5-9 (p. 116). Being male increased the mean response. Higher social class and higher parental response also increased the mean responses of the students.

In the third equation, 10.6% of the total variance in the dependent variable was explained by the model. The maternal work variable accounted for .095% of the total variance. It was not significant.

In the first equation, the Worka coefficient is positive and in the other two equations it is negative. The difference in the signs actually reflects a consistent effect due to the working of the questions. These questions, as well as the interpretations of the

coefficient signs, are discussed in Chapter IV.

Among the tests of extreme cases, the maternal employment variables were significant in two of the three equations. These findings provide support for the hypothesis that maternal employment patterns influence the attitudes expressed by their children. However, considering that one of the equations accounted for only 6.1% of the total variance and in another the maternal employment variable was not significant, these findings cannot be considered strongly supportive.

Findings: Behavioral Outcomes

An additive index comprising three behaviors was used to test Hypothesis 2A. These behaviors include having serious trouble with the law, truancy from school, and occasionally cutting classes. This was tested using standard multiple regression techniques in the following model. Males and females were run separately in the following equation.

$$E(Y) = a + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + b_4x_4 + b_5x_5 + b_6x_6 + b_7x_7 + b_8x_8 + b_9x_9$$

where:

Y = Behavior Index

x_1 = Maternal employment before school

x_2 = Maternal employment during elementary school

x_3 = Maternal employment during high school

x_4 = Grades of the student

x_5 = Social class score of the family

x_6 = Siblings at home

x_7 = Rarely talks to friends on telephone

x_8 = Talks to friends on telephone less than once a week

x_9 = Talks to friends on telephone once or twice a week

(see Table 5-10)

The equation for males could account for 8.1% of the total variance in the dependent variable. The three maternal work variables accounted for 1.18% of the total variance. None were significant. Table 5-5 (pp. 91-92) presents the zero order correlation coefficients for all of the variables. Looking back at them, one can see that the correlation coefficients for this dependent variable and the maternal work variables are not significant.

Two of the covariates were significant. The coefficient for males' grades was -.024. The negative sign indicates an inverse relationship between grades and

Table 5-10. Regression of Maternal Employment and Background Characteristics on Behavior Index for Males and Females--Partial Regression Coefficients and Standard Errors.

Independent Variables	Behavior Index	
	Males	Females
Intercept	2.745	2.709
s.e.	.199	.189
Work before school		
None	.018	-.006
s.e.	.066	.056
Part time	-.027	.065
s.e.	.081	.069
Work elementary		
None	.039	.015
s.e.	.076	.061
Part time	.012	.031
s.e.	.071	.058
Work high school		
None	-.063	-.016
s.e.	.062	.050
Part time	-.032	-.010
s.e.	.058	.048
Grades	-.024*	-.025*
s.e.	.002	.002
Social class	.000	.000
s.e.	.000	.000
Siblings at home	-.047	-.106*
s.e.	.057	.049
Rarely talks on phone	-.210*	-.103*
s.e.	.063	.081
Talks less than once week	-.066	-.146*
s.e.	.051	.044
Talks once/twice week	-.104	-.141*
s.e.	.064	.063
N =	1514	1599
R^2 =	.081	.097

* Significant at .05 level.

scores on the behavior index. An index score of zero means that the respondent answered "false" to committing any of the behaviors defined as negative. This relationship suggests that, as grades increase, commission of these behaviors decreases. The other variable which was significant in this equation was one of the dummy variables measuring peer affiliation. Rarely talking to friends on the telephone compared to talking daily, the omitted category, also decreased the commission of the behaviors in the index. Among the variables in this model, the only two which significantly influence the score on the behavior index are grades; higher grades lowered the score and a low level of peer affiliation also lowered the index score.

This equation was also run for females. The model accounted for 9.7% of the total variance in the behavior index. The maternal work variables together accounted for 1.93% of the total variance. None were significant.

As was the case for males, grades had a significant effect in this equation. An increase in grades netted a decrease in the score on the behavior index. This pattern was also the same for males. For females,

three other covariates were significant. Having siblings in the home decreased the index score. Two of the dummy variables for peer affilition also had a significant influence in this equation. Talking to friends once or twice a week and talking to friends less than once a week both were significant when compared to talking to friends daily, the omitted category. Each coefficient was negative, indicating that these levels of peer affiliation lowered scores on the behavior index. Recall that for males only minimal affiliation had a significant influence.

This model could provide no support for the hypothesis that children whose mothers work would be more likely to score higher on the index measuring negative behaviors. Chapter II speculated that children, especially males, would be more likely to commit such behaviors if their mothers were at work. It was reasoned that children whose mothers work are influenced more heavily by their peers than those whose mothers do not work, and that some manifestations of this would be in the form of behaviors defined as negative by adult society. These findings could not support that argument.

Findings:
Career Orientation

Career orientation was estimated by responses to two questions. Students were asked to predict the age at which they would marry. Second, they were asked to estimate how old they would be when their first child was born. Students were divided into three groups for analysis. The equation presented below was run for males, for females whose mothers never worked, and for females whose mothers worked full time throughout the three periods in their lives defined in this study. Career orientation was tested using standard multiple regression in the following model:

$$E(Y) = a + b_{11}x_1 + b_{22}x_2 + b_{33}x_3 + b_{44}x_4 + b_{55}x_5 + b_{66}x_6 + b_{77}x_7 + b_{88}x_8 + b_{99}x_9$$

$$b_{10\,10}x_{10} \quad b_{11\,11}x_{11} \quad b_{12\,12}x_{12}$$

where:

Y = Age at marriage, age at birth of first child

x_1 = Maternal employment before elementary school

x_2 = Maternal employment during elementary school

x_3 = Maternal employment during high school

x_4 = Grades of the student

x_5 = Social class score of the family

x_6 = Siblings at home

x_7 = Rarely talks to friends on the telephone

x_8 = Talks to friends on the telephone less than once a week

x_9 = Talks to friends on the telephone once or twice a week

x_{10} = Parent score: Working mothers as good as nonworking mothers

x_{11} = Parent score: Men work, women stay home

x_{12} = Parent score: Women happier at home

(see Table 5-11)

Sons

When the models were limited to males, they could only explain 5.3% of the total variance for anticipated age at marriage and 5.1% for anticipated age at birth of first child. Among these two equations, only one of the maternal employment variables was significant. Regarding the age at which males expected to have their first child, mothers who did not work during their sons' high school years had a significant effect compared to those mothers who worked full time, the omitted category. None of the maternal attitude variables were significant in either equation.

Table 5-11. Regression of Maternal Employment and Background Characteristics on Anticipated Ages at Marriage and Birth of First Child for Males, Females Whose Mothers Have Never Worked, and Females Whose Mothers Have Worked Full Time Throughout Their Lives--Partial Coefficients and Standard Errors.

Independent Variables	Males		Females Mothers Do Not Work		Females Mothers Work Full Time	
	1*	2*	1*	2*	1*	2*
Intercept	20.91	12.02				
s.e.	.811	.592				
Work before school						
None	.041	-.109				
s.e.	.248	.264				
Part time	.188	.261				
s.e.	.301	.283				
Work elementary school						
None	-.124	-.067				
s.e.	.289	.302				
Part time	.024	.023				
s.e.	.265	.283				
Work high school						
None	.432	.525**				
s.e.	.225	.237				
Part time	.177	.267				
s.e.	.208	.221				

* 1 = Age at marriage, 2 = Age at birth of first child

**Significant at .05 level.

Table 5-11 continued

Independent Variables	Males		Females Mothers Do Not Work		Females Mothers Work Full Time	
	1*	2*	1*	2*	1*	2*
Grades						
s.e.	.031**	.057**	.093**	.073**	.064	.077**
Social class	.008	.012	.012	.022	.035	.039
s.e.	.021	.009	.018	.020	.025	.029
Siblings at home	.328	-.244	-.202	-.243	.177	.278
s.e.	.203	.216	.406	.436	.059	.572
Rarely talks on phone	-.239	-.622**	-1.507**	2.123**	.244	-.382
s.e.	.244	.237	.742	.823	1.058	1.166
Less than once a week	-.348	-.529**	-.290	-1.094	1.279	.343
s.e.	.225	.236	.569	.600	.739	.852
Once/twice a week	-.087	-.247	.038	-.150	1.104**	1.099
s.e.	.179	.191	.333	.358	.512	.598
Mother's attitude						
Working mother as good as nonworking mother	-.060	.058	-.097	.045	.280	.338
s.e.	.086	.091	.160	.169	.234	.265
Parent attitude						
Men work, women home	-.098	.093	-.185	-.242	.266	-.066
s.e.	.125	.132	.230	.243	.361	-.405

* 1 = Age at marriage, 2 = Age at birth of first child
**Significant at .05 level.

Table 5-11 continued.

Independent Variables	Males		Females Mothers Do Not Work		Females Mothers Work Full Time	
	1*	2*	1*	2*	1*	2*
Parent attitude:						
Women happier home	.115	.101	.301	.535**	.151	.367
s.e.	.115	.122	.207	.222	.345	.397
N =	1204	1148	341	320	128	122
R^2 =	.053	.051	.108	.142	.091	.081

* 1 = Age at marriage, 2 = Age at birth of first child
**Significant at .05 level.

Grades and social class were significant in both equations. The effects of both were positive; an increase in grades and social class may be interpreted as an increase in the ages at which the event is expected to occur. These were the only significant variables in the equation which concerned age at marriage. However, two other variables--both dummy variables regarding peer affiliation--were significant in the other equation. Compared to talking to friends daily, rarely talking to friends on the telephone and talking less than once a week decreased the anticipated age at the birth of the first child.

Daughters of Nonworking Mothers

Turning to the results of the equations run for females whose mothers were not employed, the models were able to explain 10.8% of the total variance in the case of anticipating age at marriage and 14.2% of the total variance in the case of anticipating age at the birth of one's first child. Among both of these equations, only one of the maternal attitude variables was significant.

In the equation which asked expected age at marriage, only a single covariate was significant.

The dummy variable that indicated the influence of talking to friends on the telephone once or twice a week relative to talking to friends daily added to the intercept score, indicating that this level of embeddedness increases the age at which marriage is anticipated. In the equation regarding age at the birth of one's first child, the only significant variable was grades. The sign of this coefficient indicated that as grades increased so did age at which the birth of the first child was expected.

Theoretical speculations presented in Chapter II regarding the influence of parental role models led to the prediction that daughters should be more influenced than sons in their own career orientations. The fact that these models are able to explain more of the variance among the two subgroups of females than among males supports this prediction.

Another perspective, also presented in Chapter II, reasoned that, when mothers are the primary socializers of their children, they are a powerful force in that process. To the extent that the mother-child relationship departs from this tradition, as in the case of maternal employment, the relative influence of the

mother should diminish. Comparing daughters whose mothers have never worked to those whose mothers have worked full time throughout their lives provides a test of this theory. According to this theory, mothers who do not work and believe that mothers should not work should have the most powerful impact on the career orientations of their daughters, because they are their primary socializers and provide a role model of a nonworking mother. This prediction would be supported by higher significance of the parental attitude variables for females whose mothers have never worked than for those whose mothers have worked full time throughout the three periods in their lives. The results of these tests could not support this relationship.

Maternal Employment and Its Impact on Children

The results of this analysis were not able to support any of the hypotheses. Maternal employment appears to have no effect on the attitudes children express. According to the findings in Table 5-6 (pp. 102-103), there is little evidence that children of nonworking mothers are influenced more by their parents than children whose mothers are employed. This lack of effect is consistent throughout all three periods in

children's lives. There is also no significant change in the impact of part time versus full time employment for these data.

Hypothesis 2A predicted that certain types of behaviors would be more prevalent among sons than among daughters on the basis of maternal employment patterns. Again, there was no support for this hypothesis. None of the work variables were able to contribute to the explanation of variance in the dependent variable in either equation.

Hypothesis 2B predicted that career orientations expressed by daughters more so than sons would be influenced by the work patterns of their mothers. The results of these equations were not able to support the prediction that maternal work patterns were influential in determining the career orientations expressed by daughters.

CHAPTER VI
DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research explored some ways in which maternal employment might affect children. The hypotheses tested centered around the differential influence of employed versus nonemployed mothers with respect to children's behaviors and attitudes.

Children's Attitudes

The initial hypothesis predicted that the attitudes of mothers would be more influential on those expressed by their children when mothers were not employed than when they were employed. An important portion of the socialization process involves inculcating children with values that are manifested in the attitudes they express. This process should be more thoroughly accomplished by mothers who are at home full time than by those who are absent for extended periods. This hypothesis was tested using three dependent variables. Each variable asked students to report their attitudes on various dimensions of the issue of maternal employment. Parents were also asked

to report their views on these same issues. This made it possible to examine the influence of maternal employment on the congruence of attitudes expressed by mothers and their children. The findings of this study were not able to support the hypothesis that influence is greater when mothers are not gainfully employed than when mothers are employed outside the home.

Difference in Behavior

A second hypothesis predicted behavioral differences in children on the basis of maternal employment. One consequence of maternal employment may be that children of working mothers do not receive as intense a level of socialization as those children whose mothers are at home full time (Moore, 1975). This may be particularly important for males. Researchers (Currant et al., 1979) have suggested that males experience greater pessure to control more of their behaviors than females. A weakening in the process of socialization should be evidenced in behavioral differences on the basis of maternal employment.

An index comprising three behaviors was used to test this hypothesis. Males and females, tested separately, were asked if they occasionally cut classes,

if they had had any discipline problems in school, and if they had had serious trouble with the law. None of the maternal employment variables were significant. There was no indication that maternal work patterns influence behavioral outcomes for sons or daughters.

Maternal Employment and Careerism

Working mothers present a different role model for their children than nonworking mothers. However, according to the first hypothesis, nonworking mothers should be more influential in the attitudes expressed by their children than employed mothers. Accordingly, children whose mothers have never been employed and express the belief that mothers should not work outside their home express traditional orientations themselves. On the other hand, children whose mothers work, thus providing a careerist model and also expressing a careerist orientation, should express careerist orientations themselves. Based on the modeling theories presented in Chapter II, this relationship should be especially strong for daughters. This hypothesis was tested using three groups: males, females whose mothers had never worked, and females whose mothers had worked full time throughout their lives. Career orientation

was measured by the ages at which children expected to marry and have their first child.

The model was able to explain more of the variance among the two groups of females than among the group of males, as predicted. However, the prediction that the attitudes of mothers who never worked would contribute significantly to the ages at which their daughters expected to marry and have their first child was not supported by these findings. Maternal attitudes of mothers who had worked full time throughout their daughters' lives did not contribute significantly to the orientations expressed by their daughters.

A fuller understanding of the reasons for the lack of significant findings may be achieved by examining issues regarding (a) the nature of the data used in this analysis and those which (b) surround the fundamental research question itself. Finally, considerations for future research must be addressed.

The Nature of the Data

The independent variables used for this research estimated the extent of maternal employment during certain periods in children's lives. Parents responded that they usually worked full time, part time, or not at

all during each period. It may be that these classifications were too general to uncover any impact of differing work patterns. For example, working 10 hours a week for 5 years may have different outcomes for children than working 40 hours a week for 2 years. This data set would not permit an investigation of that possibility.

There is a danger in examining work patterns during one period in isolation from work patterns in other periods. The category of mothers who work full time during their children's high school years probably includes mothers who also were full time workers during their children's preschool years. Those included in the category of full time workers during high school may actually represent a number of work patterns over children's lives. This may confound the results of the study which used maternal work history during children's high school years.

Although the High School and Beyond (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1980) data permitted the investigation of work patterns during various periods in children's lives, one potentially important variable could not be included: child care arrangements made by working mothers. The students in this sample were preschoolers

in the early 1960s. In those years, less than 20% of working mothers had their children in day care centers. The majority of children were cared for by relatives, friends, or neighbors. Clearly, there are differences in the environment of a day-care center compared to the environment in a grandmother's home. Spending 40 hours a week with a grandmother may closely approximate 40 hours a week with one's mother. One explanation for the lack of significant findings in this analysis may be that maternal employment per se is not the crucial issue, but rather the nature and quality of substitute care the child receives. Differences in outcomes for children according to child care arrangements cannoe be measured using these data.

Two explanations for the failure to uncover relationships between maternal work patterns and outcomes for children have been suggested by the nature of the data set used in this study. Perhaps greater precision in specification of work patterns may be required. This analysis was unable to control for the type of substitute care children received when their mothers were at work. Information on substitute caregivers may further clarify any patterns of effect.

The Nature of the Issue

There may be circumstances related to maternal employment that nullify or obscure any effect of that employment on children. For example, substitute caregivers may be less tolerant than mothers as to nonconforming behavior in children. As such, they may socialize children quite adequately. Thus, no particular effects of maternal employment would be evident in children's behavior patterns. There is also the possibility that mothers who work feel that substitute caregivers are just as able if not more so to socialize their children. Similarly, mothers who stay home perceive themselves as best for the job. To the extent that mothers' perceptions about themselves are correct, children in either circumstance would have the most adequate socialization.

Alternatively, there may be no effects of maternal employment on children. It is possible that children require a minimum amount of contact with parents in terms of quality and quantity. Contact beyond that amount has diminishing effects on the child. The amount of time that children are separated from their parents

as a consequence of maternal employment may be above such a minimum.

Effects of Substitute Care

One explanation for the failure to find differences in children according to maternal work patterns lies in the possible impact of substitute care. If children are products of their environment, it is important to consider the nature of that environment. One way to do this is to contrast one set of circumstances with another. By comparing rather opposite child care styles, the implications of both become clearer. An example of this research is the work of Moore (1975).

Substitute caregivers have less of a vested interest in the children under their care than natural mothers. As the difference in levels of interest widens, caregivers should become less concerned with long-term outcomes for the children as influenced by their input. However, concern for immediate behavioral outcomes is important to substitute caregivers. Adherence to rules, for example, becomes increasingly important compared to the children's emotional welfare. In other words, mothers may be more vulnerable to concerns over long-term personality outcomes, whereas

substitute caregivers may be more interested in current behavioral outcomes.

The extent of this difference should be associated with the extent of relatedness. This may be in the form of a continuum, with mothers primarily concerned with long-term consequences on one end, and workers in day care centers, for example, being mainly concerned with immediate behavioral outcomes. This should also be influenced by the number of children in one's care. A mother with one child may be able to afford more tolerance than a day care center in charge of 50 children. This too may form a continuum.

Emphasis in day care centers usually focuses on conforming behavior. Under these circumstances, the observable behavior of children socialized by someone other than the mother may exhibit behaviors that conform quite well to societal standards. This higher level of conformity may give an advantage to children socialized in day care settings. Greater encouragement to conform during early years may be quite strongly linked to high levels of acceptable behavior during adulthood.

Alternatively, the conforming exterior of children socialized in these ways may mask negative consequences. In other words, part of the conformity may be a facade. Social science variables may not be correctly specified to uncover such differences.

Thus, one possibility is that substitute care may actually be beneficial to children. This benefit is a socialization that is congruent with society at large. Another possiblity is that socialization by a substitute caregiver produces a conforming exterior, masking negative outcomes. It is beyond the capabilities of this analysis to determine which sequence of events is more likely.

Mothers' Ability to Socialize

Mothers know better than anyone else the extent of their ability to socialize their children. They also know better than anyone else the style of socialization to which their children are best suited. They make decisions about their lives and those of their children on the basis of these perceptions.

One group of mothers may feel poorly suited to the role of socializer. One might speculate that these mothers believe their children are better off in the

care of someone else for two reasons. First, the income from the mother's job would give the family additional purchasing power. Children would then be able to supplement their formal education with trips that might be funded by the second paycheck. Second, these mothers reason that people who are trained to socialize children have more resources to draw on, increasing their possibility of doing a better job. Furthermore, child care professionals have chosen this as a career, suggesting both devotion and interest as well as confidence in their abilities.

Another group of mothers may make the opposite choice for the same reasons. Some mothers feel that they are much more suited to socializing their children than anyone else. For them, the sacrifice of a second salary is worth the long-term benefits of maternal involvement.

Both groups of women make decisions on the basis of personal assessments of their ability to socialize their children. Thus, the differences may not be between children on the basis of maternal employment but between women who choose to go to work and those who choose not to work and stay at home. In each case,

their children would be socialized by the mothers' estimate of who would be best suited for the job. Under these circumstances, differences between the groups of children on the basis of maternal employment should be at a minimum.

The concept of mothers' ability to socialize their children suggests another alternative. Mothers who work may be able to socialize their children as well as those who do not work. If this is the case, it is important to consider potential outcomes for the children of employed women. In this case, maternal employment is a handicap for children. Those who score near the mean on grades, for example, might fall far above the mean if they had the advantages of maternal socialization. Under these circumstances, maternal employment would have the effect of actually lowering the performance of potentially outstanding children.

To summarize these speculations on mothers' ability to socialize their children, two possibilities have been offered. One is that mothers who work differ from those who do not work in their ability to socialize children. Each group makes the decision regarding employment in consideration of their estimate regarding

their ability to socialize their children. Those who work defer socialization to those whom they assume to be more able than themselves. Those who stay at home also provide their children with the best socializer. The other possibility is that mothers do not differ in their ability to socialize. Mothers who work handicap their potentially superior children by providing inferior socializers. This would have the effect of obscuring differences which might be evident if none of the mothers worked.

Amount of Mother-Child Contact

Results of this research and studies by others suggest that children do not appear affected when mother-child contact differs by as much as 40 hours a week. This lack of observable differences has been reported for children at various ages, even among preschoolers. Traditional theories of socialization suggest that the preschool years are critical in the process of socialization. These theories also suggest that parents, especially mothers, are an important part of that process. The fact that mothers apparently can be separated from their children for nearly 25% of the time with no observable effects on the children suggests the need to reexamine traditional theories.

One alternative estimation of the relationship between parental involvement and socialization has been offered by Gold and Andres (1980). Their study, reviewed in Chapter III, compared parent-child relationships in families where the mother was employed to those where the mother was not employed. The results of their study failed to find significant differences between these groups. In speculating on the outcome of their study, they suggested that there may be a level of contact between fathers and children necessary for adequate socialization. The concept suggested by the authors is one which might be extended to the relationship between mothers and their children. There may be some amount of contact--in terms of quality and/or quantity--between mothers and their children which is necessary for adequate socialization. Beyond this level, more contact may have diminishing returns with respect to the adequacy of socialization. It may be that maternal employment at any level is more than the necessary level of contact for adequate socialization.

When research findings begin to suggest that, even during the preschool years, children are not at risk during extended absences of their mothers--as in the

case of maternal employment--traditional theories of socialization need to be reviewed. One alternative to the estimation of the high level of parental involvement is the concept of a necessary level of interaction. Findings of the present study and others suggest that maternal contact can vary by as much as 40 hours a week with no measurable effect on children. Thus, the role of parents, especially mothers, in the process of socializing their children may not be as pivotal as previously believed.

There is also evidence that parents are not the only source of socialization. Other sources may be fairly influential in this process. Research has suggested that peer relationships are an important element in socialization. Preschool age children in day care display strong indications of the influence of peers (Schachter, 1981). Coleman (1961) argued that peer relationships may be especially powerful for high school students. Kagan (1984) has also reported the importance of peers for the socialization of high school students. It may be that parents constitute only a portion of socialization and the loss of contact time with mothers due to employment is not important in the overal process.

It may also be that studies using high school students as respondents tap into a period in the socialization process when the influence of peers is especially powerful and maternal influence is at a minimum.

If maternal work patterns do affect children's lives, these may be ameliorated by stable, satisfactory substitute cae. Mothers' perceptions of their ability to socialize when considering employment may obscure any relationship. On the other hand, it is possible that there is no significant effect on children relative to maternal employment patterns. There may be a level of contact with children necessary for successful socialization. Full time employment may not represent a segment of time great enough to affect socialization. It is also important to consider the possibility that outcomes for children are largely determined by forces other than maternal socialization.

Future Research

This study was unable to specify ways in which mothers' work patterns affect their children. In attempting to provide plausible explanations for these results, several directions for future research became apparent.

It is possible that some groups of children are affected more by working or nonworking mothers than others. It should also be valuable to investigate in more detail factors that cause mothers to go to work. More attention should be paid to the broader social milieu of the families of interest, including the quality of substitute care of children.

Variation Between Groups

Outcomes of maternal employment may be different for different groups. There is some indication that lower class sons of working mothers are at an academic disadvantage at least in their early years. Single parent families may also be affected in ways which are different from two parent families. Families with one child may have outcomes that are not the same for families with several children.

It is difficult to control for a number of variables simultaneously. Even with a data set as large as the High School and Beyond (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1980), sample size dropped drastically when using only a few controls. Use of techniques such as weighting and cluster sampling should be useful for analyzing such research questions.

Factors Causing Mothers to Work

Mothers who choose to work and do so for personal gratification should be different from those who would rather not work but do so out of necessity. This distinction is difficult to operationalize. Previous researchers have assumed that lower class and many middle class women work for the money. Some middle class and upper class women work for the gratification. Although a case can be made for the distinction between social classes, this may not be totally accurate.

Women may be employed or stay home on the basis of their estimate of their ability to socialize their children. This decision may or may not be heavily affected by social class. Women who feel forced by extraneous circumstances to work may be resentful, regardless of the satisfaction they derive from their work. Job satisfaction and satisfaction with the employment role are two distinct variables and should be treated as such.

The Social Milieu

Studies done prior to the late 1970s suggest that mothers' attitudes toward work influenced their

daughers' sex role attitudes. More recent studies, including the present one, have been unable to draw this conclusion. One explanation is that individual attitudes are shaped by attitudes of the society at large and also by norms of behavior. Two decades ago, when working mothers--especially those with young children --were not the norm, daughters may have been heavily influenced by their nontraditional mothers. As maternal employment has become more common, it has become more difficult to sort the influence of mothers on their daughters' attitudes from the influence of the society at large.

Further studies concerned with possible effects of maternal work patterns should take into account three factors that might affect findings:

1. It is important to distinguish between groups of families that may be more or less affected by maternal employment.

2. There is also the need to take into account the reasons that cause mothers to make work-related decisions.

3. It is important to consider the social context within which mothers make their employment decisions.

Analysis of the data in High School and Beyond (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1980) did not uncover any strong evidence that children of employed women are significantly different from children of nonworking women. There was no suggestion that the extent of maternal employment was related to the extent of attitude congruence between parents and their children. Children of working women were not consistently distinguishable from those of nonworking women with regard to behaviors or sex role orientations.

Conclusions

If maternal employment does affect children, the nature of these effects remains elusive. If effects exist and if they are to be specified, further precision of potential relationships and the variables with which to measure them is required.

This study was able to investigate possible impacts of the extent of maternal employment controlling for social class. One shortcoming in the research prior to this analysis had been a lack of adequate specification of the social class variable (Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1982). The sample used in this analysis was a stratified random sample of high school sophomores

and seniors throughout the contiguous United States. As such, this sample is representative of the high school population in this society. Much of the previous research dealing with maternal employment has used small samples which were likely to be homogeneous on important issues. This large data set, gathered from across the nation, reflected the heterogeneity of the population. Furthermore, the size of the sample permitted the use of a number of controls simultaneously. The use of multiple controls has been rare for studies of this nature.

The present study did not find any consistent indication that children are differentially affected on the basis of their mothers' work histories. These results are consistent with many previous findings. More importantly, these results were derived from a data set with a number of characteristics missing from previous analyses. A large, nationally representative sample suggests that these findings might be generalized to a broad portion of the population. The social class variable was more fully operationalized than in previous analyses. Data on maternal work patterns covered the life of the child. The combination of these

characteristics, together with the failure to document effects of maternal employment, suggests that more detailed theoretical specification is required before further research can be undertaken.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Susan Harvey Hoerbelt received her Bachelor of Science degree in home economics from Florida State University in 1968. Following graduation, she taught science and home economics on the junior and senior high school levels in Tampa, Florida, for 4 years. During that time, Ms. Hoerbelt was department chair and served on numerous educational committees.

In 1980, Ms. Hoerbelt received a Master of Science degree in sociology from the University of South Florida. While a student there, she was involved in a number of university programs, including an alcohol awareness program and several sociological research projects. Ms. Hoerbelt also worked as a field director for the Human Resources Institute of the University of South Florida.

Ms. Hoerbelt is currently an adjunct lecturer in the Department of Sociology at the University of South Florida. She teaches classes in marriage and the family and the sociology of the family. Ms. Hoerbelt lives in Temple Terrace, Florida, with her husband and two sons.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Felix M. Berardo, Chairman
Professor, Sociology

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Alan G. Agresti
Professor, Statistics

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Constance L. Shehan
Assistant Professor, Sociology

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Joseph S. Vandiver
Professor, Sociology

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Hernan Vera

Hernan Vera
Associate Professor, Sociology

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of Sociology in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Dean, Graduate School

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